

SPECIAL ISSUE

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INSIDE!

SPIN

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**DAMN
IT,
JANET**

**THE
BATTLE FOR
CONTROL
OF JANET
JACKSON**

**PAUL SIMON
RICHARD LLOYD
SOLOMON BURKE
VOLCANO SUNS
OZZY ON TRIAL
KEN & BARBIE
DON KING
86'D: THE YEAR
DONE DIRT CHEAP
'87 PREDICTIONS**



Materia chroniony prawem autorskim

A cowboy wearing a white hat and a blue button-down shirt is shown in profile, looking towards the right. He is holding a cigarette in his left hand. In the foreground, there are two packs of Marlboro cigarettes: a red pack labeled 'Marlboro' and a yellow pack labeled 'Marlboro 100's'. The background is a warm, golden-brown, out-of-focus field.

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They don't grant a lot of interviews, but they aren't as plastic as you might expect. By Sukey Pett. 82

TOP SPIN

[SCENE: Christmas Eve, 1993. The drawing room of the White House, a little after eleven. President ALBERT GORE and his best friend JAMES BAKER enter. Through the open door are heard clinking sounds of tableware being cleared and the shrill voice of First Lady TIPPER GORE. The sounds are indistinct, an abstract cacaphony.]

JAMES: You know, it's times like this I miss television. Remember Lawrence Welk!
[The President shrugs and goes over to his favorite chair, facing the fire.]
JAMES: There is CBN. If we want.
[The President dismisses the notion with the sort of look older people have when they've managed to condense most of the language into four or five facial expressions. Both men settle gloomily into their chairs. Neither feels the spirit of Christmas, the President's first in office.]

JAMES: Cigar, Al?
[The President takes the cigar, unwraps the warning label and tosses it onto the fire, picks up a box of matches, emblazoned with a red warning sticker, lights his cigar after a couple of attempts, and throws the rest of the matches into the fire too].

JAMES [teasing]: It says you shouldn't do that.

AL: I know. That's why I did it.
JAMES: Don't you think you were a bit hard on Tipper tonight?

AL: Damn it, man, milk cartons!

JAMES: She means well.

AL: It was bad enough when she wanted to sticker milk—But warnings about the lost kids on the back of the cartons! God help us! Did you hear her? "Albert, some of these children may have listened to rock lyrics!" What's that make them—rabid? Dangerous? Is it better not to find them? Better to pray to God the little bastards don't have a change of heart and find their own way home?

[Enter JEFF, the head butler, closing the heavy doors. He is carrying a silver tray with two huge snifters and a thick crystal decanter.]

JEFF: Brandy, sir? [The President glares at his servant.] It's out of the bottle, sir. [The President nods affirmatively.]

JAMES: She labels the brandy?

AL [flapping his hand to slow but not entirely stop JEFF pouring]: James, a woman who can smell the hidden evil on a milk carton long-ago-condemned brandy.

JAMES: What are we coming to?
AL: We did this to ourselves. Thank you, Jeff, leave it. Goodnight. Merry Christmas. [JEFF bows, murmuring Christmas wishes, and leaves.]

AL [holding his brandy in both hands, swishing it around, watching the fire and as if talking to it]: Sometimes I think of killing her.

JAMES: Al...

AL: No, really. I could walk into her room, dressed up as a giant sticker. WARNING: I AM A MACHETE. It's just a fantasy, of course.

JAMES: Susan's gotten a little better, although the other night she came screaming into my room, begging me to urge you to drop the bomb. On us. As a last-ditch atonement. She's concerned the Russians'll do it and we won't get the credit.

AL: She's still having nightmares?

JAMES: No, she was wide-awake.

AL [puffing on his cigar and sinking back into the chair]: It got us elected. I'm not saying it wasn't a good idea. The PMRC was the right thing at the right time. It's just that we should have stopped when we were ahead. Now how do we turn her off?

JAMES [dismally]: And Susan. Suddenly the doors are flung open. TIPPER enters, dressed entirely in black. Her gray-streaked blonde hair is sprayed so stiffly outwards it looks like the porcelain wings of a Christmas tree angel. Her arms remain outstretched, and her smile, which exploded upon her entrance, threatens permanence. Her eyes glow brilliantly, possessed so wholly they seem vacant.]

TIPPER: I bring tidings of Christmas joy! I had to fire our maid—damn her to the fires!—because I found her with a radio, listening to you know what. Broadcast, no doubt, by the Canadians. We should occupy that heathen country. What's on television? [Suddenly she is in motion, standing over the coffee table and pointing to the decanter] Where's the bottle?

AL [wearily]: Must've been at the end, so he threw it away.

TIPPER: No matter. I stickered the decanter.

[Both men lean forward and see, on the bottom of the decanter, like a squashed moth, a small orange label. The First Lady crosses to the window. She sees, in the distance, children holding candles and song sheets. She throws open a panel and screams hysterically. Both



Mark Sarant



Chris Corall

Top: Solomon Burke sharing the message of love with a few appreciative fans. Left: Ken and Barbie trying in vain to spot a cab outside their favorite nightclub.

men run to her.]
BOTH: What is it?
TIPPER: There! Terrorists! Guard, shoot! Stop them! Singing hounds of Hell!
[A cold, startled marine appears by the window. He looks anxiously at the President, who waves his arm in a violent circle over his head and pulls his hysterical wife from the window.]
TIPPER: Assassins!
[The marine understands and fires harmlessly into the air. JAMES glumly watches the awkward but hasty retreat of small figures in heavy clothing.]
TIPPER: Did he get them?
AL [straining to keep her from the window]: I think he may have nicked

one. It's very dark. I believe they were carolers.

TIPPER [muttering]: ... spitting venom of Satan...

AL: Yes. Children. Singing carols, actually. For us.

[The clock strikes the hour, a single, ominous clang.]

AL [thinly]: There! It's Christmas. Merry Christmas.

JAMES [downing his brandy]: Goodnight Al, goodnight Tipper. Merry Christmas to you both. [He takes her hands and kisses her cheek. Then he shakes his President's hand. Leaning forward, he whispers:] May God grant peace on earth to all men, Al. Especially us.

—Bob Guccione, Jr.

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THE SAVAGE 650

Beauty and the beach.

By 5:05 Matt had finished work.

By 5:20 he was at the dealership picking up the keys. He rolled his new Savage onto the street. He swung a leg over and settled in behind the teardrop tank.

Matt pushed the electric start and the single cylinder, four stroke engine rumbled awake. Here was power in his hands. And the beat of a crisp, throaty exhaust note.

He had two bikes before this one but this was his first new motor-

cycle. And the great thing about it was it hadn't cost him his life savings.

First stop was Donna's place. Matt accelerated up the street, the hard pulling torque pushing him to the back of the seat.

Donna was waiting on the porch when he pulled up. Matt sat perfectly balanced, barely 26 inches from the ground. Donna climbed on board. He gave the throttle a twist and off they shot into the twilight, headed for the beach,

where friends get together talking about anything and everything. Tonight it was who might get a ride on Matt's new Savage.

He and Donna got off the bike and Matt couldn't help but like what he saw: his Savage 650 loaded with chrome. Chrome spokes, headlight and fender rails. Chrome battery cover, shocks, and mirrors. He smiled. The ocean sand and his Savage looked great together.

Beauty and the beach.

*I can't believe I got all this bike for just \$2299.**

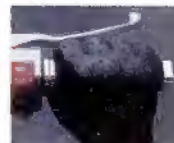


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POINT BLANK



Letters

Edited by Karen Dolan

The Swaggart Bop

I'd like to say how much I enjoyed your article about Reverend Swaggart. As a spiritual minister, a southerner, and a local Boston rock personality, it warms my heart to see in print anyone exposing the tremendous fascist undertaking of the "born again" Christian movement. The whole thing is a scam based on the "high" that one gets from power, the pulpit, and money—the greatest thrust these whores know. If one would consider the bloodshed and extortion that seem to underline the history of humanity in the name of so-called religious beliefs, we truly know where "Satan" hangs out. No one person can tell anyone how to find spiritual truth. Rock 'n' roll lyrics are but a reflection of the present currents of society.

Rev. Tennie Komar
Barre, MA

As the publisher of an up-and-coming heavy metal publication, I am quite concerned over the ongoing charades of Bible-wielding fanatics such as Jimmy Swaggart, Jerry Falwell, and the like. I strongly believe in freedom of the press and the freedom of one

He doesn't know how to spell it, but he knows he doesn't like it. TV star Jimmy Swaggart railing against every sin in the dictionary, and one that isn't.

to buy and read what one wants. I know that my publication in no way inflicts any thoughts of evil or anything similar to that on any member of today's youth. I'd like to protect my future as a publisher as well as the futures of all the great heavy metal and hard rock bands who are just trying to make a living the best way they know how and are using the talents God gave them as musicians to secure a happy and financially secure lifestyle. I believe that is also known as striving for the "American Dream."

Aimee Kristi
Publisher of Hard Rocks
Montclair, NJ

Like most things that threaten the basic fabric of our society, the call for censorship has been met with apathy and a misunderstanding of what it could mean to each of us personally. The temptation to ignore Swaggart and company is great. But in a political climate in which the President can get away with joking about nuking the Soviets, the politically absurd cannot be taken lightly. It falls to the rock 'n' roll community to take to the foreground of an important issue. True, what we as individuals choose to listen to should not, logically, be an

issue of national concern. But there it is, and the ramifications make it essential that we take up the struggle.

Robyn Lee
New York, NY

Dear Jimmy Swaggart:
It was an act of courage for SPIN to interview you. Your ideas of American ideals are misplaced and an insult to the men who created this country. I'll defend to the death your right to preach your views, but I will fight forever your attempts to censor me. I am not overcome with Satan. I just don't agree with you.

Philip Harley
Brooklyn, NY

A Geek in the Senate

I don't appreciate the way John Trubee, in his review of *Gun Shy* by the Screaming Blue Messiahs, refers to Peter Garrett of Midnight Oil as a "geek." Any man who can come close to election in the Australian Senate on a nuclear disarmament party ticket and can create music with a sincere and motivating message in today's world of shallow pop fluff can hardly be referred to as a geek.

Jeff Calvert
London, Ontario

Pope Joe

I enjoyed and agreed with John Leland's review of Joe Strummer's latest effort and the update on the Clash/Big Audio Dynamite soap opera (Singles, November). Jones and Strummer are no longer Sandinistas, they are Contras. I don't know why I should be surprised. Dylan found God. Jerry Rubin found Wall Street. Eldridge Cleaver became a conservative ordained minister. It is sad that one of the most influential bands of the '70s and '80s has lost touch with where they came from and the people who are still stuck there. I'm sick and tired of listening to Joe Strummer pontificate his ex-user-gone-straight morality about why I shouldn't smoke pot. Where were they for Live Aid? Where were they for Amnesty International? Where were they for Artists Against Apartheid?

Eric Rife
San Diego, CA

The killing question

I would like to congratulate Robert Keating on a beautifully written article, "Atlanta, Who Murdered Your Children?" (October). I've lived in Atlanta for the past six years; moved here

at the height of the event. A good friend of my father was an FBI agent who worked on parts of the case and has convinced me that Wayne Williams took part in the two killings. Now that's only two, what about the others? How can a judicial system worthy of our respect just close a case and destroy evidence—evidence that could easily indict several others? I don't understand!

M. Torino
Atlanta, GA

House Afire!

As a Chicago musician and songwriter, it was gratifying to see your article on Chicago's house music scene ("Burning Down the House," November). "House" has brought some much needed international attention to the local music scene. Our writers and players have always been on the cutting edge, but are handicapped by the local music business scene, hopelessly inept and backwards for a city this size. Until now. The irony, however, is that the musicians here have been "paying dues" for years, while a bunch of young upstart DJ's are getting the record deals! I'm throwing away my jazz theory books, and "jumping house."

Steven Pruitt
Chicago, IL

At first your magazine was great. The letters section was disorganized. The articles had a wit to them that you don't find very often. And the back page always had something terrifically interesting on it. Something irreverent. But now your letters are serious and all arranged under sub-heads, and there isn't a single caustic remark to be found. Loosen up, get off the highway, and onto some more back roads. I just miss the messy magazine you used to be.

Christina Pelech
Rausser, NC

Indignant response: SPIN interviews Ken & Barbie on the back page of this issue (caught off-guard in their CBGB matching biker outfits); your letter didn't deserve a neat and clever sub-head; all the mess you can handle can be found on the fourth floor at 1965 Broadway (and that's just the staff!); and as for wit and back roads, read SPIN's December interview with Jimmy Swaggart.

Correction

The photo of R.E.M. on p. 58 of the October issue should have been credited to Caryn Rose.

Aretha

A One-Word Definition Of Soul.



"Aretha rockets off," writes the *Village Voice* about the Queen's new album. "Sounding looser and more exultant than ever, she's game, ready for anything...Her voice is radiant, full of fire, and she's as playful as she is passionate." Surrounded by a stellar crew of musicians (Steve Jordan, Kenny G, David Sancious, Randy Jackson, Chuck Leavell and others), and featuring such special guest partners as Keith Richards, George Michael, Ron Wood and Larry Graham, Aretha reaches another artistic peak.

Aretha. With "Jimmy Lee," "I Knew You Were Waiting (For Me)"—duet with George Michael, "Jumpin' Jack Flash,"* "Rock-A-Lott" and "He'll Come Along"***

Produced by Narada Michael Walden
*Produced by Keith Richards
**Produced by Aretha Franklin

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and Compact Discs

ARISTA

FLASH

Edited
by
John Leland

SURF NAZIS

**Zodiac Mindwarp and the Love
Reaction Make Sperm Obsolete.**

Who are Zodiac Mindwarp and the Love Reaction and what do they mean?

The first half is simple.

A technicolor collective from northern England, they are: self-professed acid casualty and comic book fan Zodiac Mindwarp on vocals and fake American accent; Cobalt Stargazer on lead guitar; Kid Chaos on bass; Siam Thunderhide on drums; and Evil Bastard (reportedly receiving psychiatric treatment, but aren't we all?) on keyboards.

Mr. Warp and Co. are this year's Now People, thanks to yet another psychedelic revival in London. Or perhaps, like Phil Collins, it just never went away. Doctor and the Medics spearheaded the latest incarnation by reaching the UK No. 1 spot with their version of "Spirit in the Sky," and Zodiac rode in on the reverberative kudos. Their surf Nazi garb is leather, leather, chains, leather, and at least one painted tin helmet. "Our roadie brought it back from the Falklands after shooting an Argentine," Warp lied to one writer.

It's not just the music. Nightclubs like Alice in Wonderland and the Ark are playing Grateful Dead records and booking bands like Gay Bikers on Acid. Shops like Planet Alice offer a cosmic range of incense, beads, pendants, caftans, crushed velvet flares, and overpriced Strawberry Alarm Clock records. Syd Barrett fanzines vanish as quickly as they appear.

Mindwarp music is hard sludge with a psychedelic backdrop and a dollop of Motorhead, with whom they recently toured. Lyrics are suitably ear-catching: "I'm the high priest of love/I'm shooting babies from the end of my dick/This ain't science, honey, this is magic."

So what does it mean? In real life Zodiac Mindwarp is Mark Manning, a former cartoonist who likes poetry and art galleries. "I've a theory," he said recently, "that all creative acts—whether they're painting, writing music, anything—are conducted in a state of madness, which is basically the unconscious mind unleashed. That's what Zodiac is."

—Jessica Berens



Adrian Boot

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CODPIECE

John Sex Flaunts his Talent in Two Very Tacky Videos.

You're having one of those days, and it's time for a pick-me-up. And watching yuppies stuff ferrets down their pants won't do (unless the ferrets take a mouthful).

What you want is sex. More specifically, you want Sex. Not a little Sex, either. You want a lotta Sex.

A lotta Sex is exactly what you get in John Sex's new videos, "Bump and Grind It" and "Hustle with My Muscle," both ably and campily directed by Tom Rubnitz, who made "The Drag Queen Marathon" (filmed on Mother's Day 1985).

Rubnitz lives in a multilevel loft among dolls, a flowered wastebasket, an original Flip It! book, and Yardley "Twiggy" eyeliner, and is our answer to John Waters—but without the mustache. Sex is divine, but I don't mean Divine.

In "Hustle with My Muscle," Sex is pursued in and out of bars, cars, stages, just about anywhere and everywhere, cuz these girls can't get enuff.

Hustle with the muscle

Hustle with the muscle

Can you handle the man below my belt?

Hustle with the muscle

Hustle with the muscle

Girls I've got the most I think you've ever felt

Cut to: shot of a python (Sex's pet Delilah). Cut to: Delilah wrapping herself around Sex. Cut back to: salivating women. A shot of Sex's crotch. Cut to: bratwurst on a plate.

Woman's voice: "Now I know why they call you the ruler."

Sex even plays what looks like a gold lamé Randy Rhoads guitar. Cool.

He's prettier than Boy George ever was and has a better body. Besides, the guy is funny. And he's got really big . . . hair.

"If you need my manly action," he offers, "to complete your satisfaction."

Well, all the girls (with and without something extra) do.

Nobody's going to call John Sex the Next Big Thing.

But he's got one. Or it's one hell of a sock collection, folks.

—Sukey Pelt

TALKING DREADS

DUKE BOOTE, COWRITER OF "THE MESSAGE," COMPARES LOCKS WITH MUTUBARUKA.

Mutubaruka stands transfixed, eyes closed, a shock of white hair separating his dreadlocks above his sweat-drenched brow. Singing, talking. Part of the unbroken line of griots and poets that call back our unruly past.

First and foremost, Mutubaruka is a poet. He has been writing and publishing since the late '60s and credits the civil rights movement of that period as one of his main influences.

Mutubaruka performs with his eyes closed; he doesn't dance for the audience. When I asked what American artists he liked, he replied, "Ella Fitzgerald, Curtis Mayfield, Chuck Jackson, Jarreau, and Stevie Wonder." He laughed when I told him they all perform with their eyes closed as well.

With locks trailing down the middle of my back, I feel like those hip white boys must feel—you know the type, the ones who have adopted black music or some part of black culture. I had to ask: What do you think of American brothers like myself, born and raised here, who



have learned about the Rastafarian culture and adopted some of the ways?

Mutubaruka speaks calmly, in a low register. "I don't say I'm adopting. It's like a lot of reggae artists are influenced by American acts; Chuck Jackson, Curtis Mayfield, and all that there from a long time back. You know something like Rasta come up rising out of Jamaica, but it is everywhere now. I can't see that as adopting. A black man cannot adopt another black man's thing. He can adopt a red Indian thing, or a Chinaman thing, or a white man thing. But him can't adopt his own thing. I see that as black people influencing black people."

Twenty years ago, people like Miles, Charles Lloyd, and John Coltrane gave me my mind. Mutubaruka and his reggae brethren have given me back my body.

—Duke Boote

Mutubaruka with his eyes open.



WAX THE WICKET BURNING CHRISTMAS
 AND ALL THE BURNING CHRISTMAS
 WAX THE WICKET BURNING CHRISTMAS
 AND ALL THE BURNING CHRISTMAS



JOAN JETT IN THE MORNING
 DON JOHNSON WHILE WE LAY
 WERE JUST SOME OF THE GOODIES
 FOR THE BIG HOLIDAY!



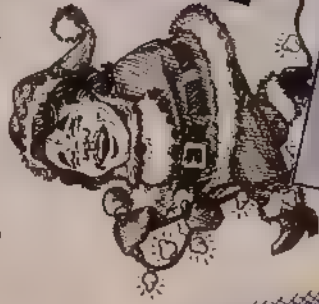
THE STOCKINGS WERE HUNG
 BY THE JACUZZI WITH CARE
 IN HOPES LUTHER VANDROSS
 WOULD SERENADE THE NIGHT AIR!



WITH MIAMI SOUND MACHINE
 CRANKED UP ALL THE WAY
 SURVIVOR AND EUROPE
 WERE THE NEXT PICKS TO PLAY!



JAMES BROWN DRESSED AS SANTA!
 "WEIRD AL" AS AN ELF!
 QUIET RIOT AS BODYGUARDS
 FOR JAMES' SLEIGHRIDIN' SELF!



"ON MACEO, BOOTSY,
 AND DON'T FORGET FRED!
 GOTTA LOTTA DELIVERIES
 HAUL ASS ON THIS SLED!"



"I'M THE B-BOY SANTA
 FROM THE COOL NORTH POLE
 AND I GOT WHAT YOU NEED
 TO FILL THE HOLE IN YOUR SOUL!"



"FOR YOU LITTLE BROTHER
 THE FAB T-BIRDS HOT BLUES PLAY!
 FOR YOU LITTLE SISTER
 YOU'LL LOVE THIS 'TIL TUESDAY!"



AND I IN MY SMOKING JACKET
AND MAMA IN HER KITCHEN
HAD SETTLED OUR HASH
FOR A LONG WINTER'S VISION!

WHEN UP ON THE ROOF
THERE AROSE SUCH A CLATTER
WE TURNED DOWN CHEAP TRICK
TO SEE WHAT WAS THE MATTER!



THE MOON ON THE BREAST
OF THE NEW FALLEN SNOW
GAVE A LUSTRE OF MIDDAY
TO OBJECTS BELOW!

THEN WHAT TO MY BLOODSHOT EYES
DID APPEAR
BUT A CUSTOMIZED SLEDMOBILE
FILLED WITH HOLIDAY CHEER!



"TONIGHT'S MY NIGHT
AND I'M DOING IT TO DAWN!
BUT I WON'T FORGET DADDY—
HERE'S THE NEW STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN!"



HE BEAMED ALL AROUND
THEN WENT TO RIFLE THE 'FRIDGE
WRAPPED HIS HAND ROUND A TURKEY LEG
HOLLERED "TAKE IT TO THE BRIDGE!"



STARTED DOING THE SPLITS
THEN SPLIT UP THROUGH THE CHIMNEY
SLAPPED FIVE ALL AROUND
THEN HOPPED INTO HIS JITNEY!



"FOR YOU LITTLE MAMA
WANNA HEAR THE BIRDS SING?
MY BRAND-NEW BAG'S
GOT CYNDI LAUPER'S NEW THING!"

WE HEARD HIM SAY
AS HE RODE OFF
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL
WITH HIS REINDEER

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**The Georgia
Satellites Practice
George Jones
Covers for the
Judgment Day**

The Georgia Satellites want to sound like the devil on roller skates. They like to play loud, and they have the stacks of Marshalls to do so. They even play their Neil Young records loud, not just "Rust Never Sleeps," but also mellow stuff like "Old Man." They wake each other up to play their new Faces bootlegs.

They claim they're from hell (in a bucket) but they really mean Atlanta. Rick Price and Mauro Magellon used to play in a band called the Brains. Just as they were getting nationally famous, and before Cyndi Lauper could record their "Money Changes Everything," they broke up. Price and Magellon joined Rick Richards and Dan Baird in the Satellites. They added the Georgia when they put out an EP in Britain, and the Satellites from England bummed out. Home turf, after all.

The Georgia Satellites are from Georgia, but they don't sound like the Allman Brothers or R.E.M. Rick Price likes R.E.M., but is miffed that Mike Mills said R.E.M. blew the Brains away at R.E.M.'s first gig. Rick wants to speak to Mike Mills. Texas death match. Blood feud. Thrilla in Manila. Fifteen rounds, no hitting below the belt.

The Satellites sound like very old Stones, and they like that. Their guitars sound dirty, like they're playing with sand in their teeth. Their songs have about three chords, maybe four, but that's all they need. They could be the next Top if they hired a marketing genius. On good nights they sound like a stock car race. Their music is great straight, but it's a lot more comfortable with a couple of

HELL ON SKATES



Bonnie Graham

Rolling Rocks under your belt.

The Satellites are demonic onstage, mellow in person. Rick Price wants to open Rick's Rod and Salad Bar—auto repair with veggies. Rick Richards wants to buy New Zealand. Dan Baird has no idea what he wants to do. Mauro Magellon wants to open up a nursery or transcendental meditation center. Better yet, best of all, get one of those isolation tanks and fit it with wheels, curtains, some little portholes, a cosmic camper.

All of the Georgia Satellites like kung fu movies, and, they say, any movie in which Edward G. Robinson says, "Yonder lies the castle of my faddah" (even though it was really Tony Curtis who said it). They like George Jones, and cover "The Race Is On" and

"White Lightning" in their live show. And whatever else comes into their heads. Sometimes one thinks up a really cool cover, tears into it, and lets the others figure it out as they go.

If you had to pick one band for a year on a desert island, it wouldn't be the Georgia Satellites. But if you could pick a house band for your never-ending party in hell, they'd be the one. They'd probably like it too. Free beer. A hot crowd. Smoking Marshall cabinets. And the devil roller skating around in time to the music.

—Chris Carroll



Chris Carroll

Ladies and gentlemen, the Georgia Satellites; L-R: Rick Price, Dan Baird, Mauro Magellon, Rick Richards.



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HOT MUSIC

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WHITE TRASH

Tav Falco and Panther Burns Dig Ditches for Soap Suds and Turds.

"The Panther Burns, thinking of themselves as the ditchdiggers of American music, have, I think, found the right place to live and work," says group founder Tav Falco. That place is Memphis, the city that introduced rock 'n' roll to white America, and was as far north as many Delta bluesmen ever got. "We're picking up on the sugar ditch mentality down here, the idea of living in a real natural way. We're on the edge of a sugar ditch with Panther Burns, and we're about to fall in."

No shit. "Sugar Ditch Revisited" was the first of two Panther Burns EPs released on the French New Rose label this year. It marked the return to vinyl after nearly half a decade of America's finest rank-assed roots band.

No shit. When Panther Burns splattered on the national scene five years ago, it was with an unbridled mule of bluesabilly sound. Ditchdiggers. Not, like the Cramps, gravediggers, nor, like Stray Cats, diggers into ma's makeup kit. Ditches. Ditches for soap suds and turds. The authentic sound of the Deep South. No jokes really, unless you count the flimsy interdependence of Falco's voice and the beat, or the twisted caricatures of Scotty Moore licks. The group's echoes were as resonantly creepy as the Johnny Burnette Trio's. Influential beyond their record sales, Panther Burns (really Falco with an unsteady supporting cast) watched from the shadows as roots rock elevated itself into beer commercials. "Panther Burns," says Falco, "is simply not equipped, aesthetically or otherwise, to go in certain commercial directions that are popular today."

No shit. "There's no money in this, man," Falco says with resignation. An Arkansas blues devotee who originally moved to Memphis to document the Delta blues on vid and still cameras, Falco must be content just occasionally plying that Memphis sound—a sound that lives on in the blues of the She Wolf, Jessie Mee Hemphill (whom Falco included on an upcoming compilation album of Memphis musicians). "Panther Burns," says Falco, "are not a revival-type outfit. We feel like there's nothing to revive here, because the music has been going on. It's a seminal form."

"Club owners should be alerted to the fact that Panther Burns feel more comfortable in a cotton loft with a naked light bulb, just blowing it out a real casual way with friends, playing the kind of music that makes you want to drag your partner across the floor."

It's not inconceivable to picture Falco whiling away his time at the dog track and shuffleboard palaces one day, the way another of the town's neglected geniuses, the silver-haired rockabilly duke Charlie Feathers, spends his days. But it won't be without a fight.

—Don Howland

The Shop Assistants and the Archies Have Never Been Seen Together.

One of the lasting fetishes of the English rock press is the need to create new movements in rock. The latest hands to fall prey to this are a clutch of young independent groups burdened with the rubric of Preteen Rock: London's Miaoow, Coventry's Mighty Lemon Drops, and a band from Edinburgh called the Shop Assistants. Like, forget teen music, we're going further back here: fast cars and beer are out, candy and holding hands in class are in. Despite mixing Eno sleepiness with Romones thrash, the Shop Assistants appear in the English press as a band that would make the Archies look like Black Flag.

Admittedly, reminding their singer, Alex, of this situation does provoke a youthful response. She screams. And the band's guitarist, quiet young David, looks thoughtfully at his knees while drummer Laura pretends not to have heard and bassist Sarah merely sneers. The Shop Assistants are entitled to their displeasure; it seems that everything they do is scrutinized and found wanting. Even a grown-up move like signing to a major (Blue Guitar, the new Rough Trade/Chryslis link-up) is seen as a sell-out.

This vexes them also. "It's just this country," David tells his knees. "Nobody gets worried if Hüsker Dü sign to a major in America. I mean, if you've got a friend who works for the civil ser-

ZIT ATTACK

vice or something, you don't ask them how they make their money."

"I do," says Sarah. This dissenting voice aside, the Shop Assistants are stunningly unconcerned about their big

new record deal. Alex is more interested in trying to get people to guess her age (22), but does say, "I don't actually know if we'll be going long enough to worry about our music changing, you

know. I don't even know if I'd like the Shop Assistants if I wasn't one."

David is much more your punk fan. "I think our LP's great," he says. "I listen to it all the time."

The LP, *Cheap and Nasty*, benefits from David and Alex's central disagreements. While Alex displays a fondness for C&W and Dusty Springfield, David spends his days lighting off condescending Ramones comparisons. "It's just that I'll be playing stuff when we're recording something and I can hear things going on, subtle stuff, tonal, and it's been lost when the record comes out."

He's right. The Shop Assistants' songs sometimes create a weird sort of harmonics, a melodic drone that's hidden in the music. They are a little like a reasonable Jesus and Mary Chain, a comparison they don't mind. Like that band, they veer toward simple thrash at times. And also like that band, they are capable of better. Right now, the Shop Assistants are young; they have made some good records and a couple of splendid ones. Their future promises more, however, and there will come a day when no critic will even contemplate asking them what sort of ice cream they like best. In time, even Alex will like the Shop Assistants.

—David Quantick



LOW LIFE

Howard Chaykin Gets Knee-Deep in Funk in *Time*².

Howard Chaykin thinks maybe he's in the wrong business. "I don't know," he says grimly. "But I just can't adjust my sensibilities to reach an audience interested in guys running around in masks, gnashing their teeth, and saving the poor from themselves."

After making his living as a comic-book artist for nine years, Chaykin walked away in disgust in 1979. He came back in 1983 with *American Flagg!* (First Comics), a beautifully composed pastiche of ballsy dames in black garter belts, rampaging political action committees, and a lone Chandlerian Tidy-Bow! Man paddling against a shit-stream of moral corruption. The 26 monthly issues of *Flagg!* that Chaykin produced were an exhilaratingly profane tour de force, perhaps the most coherent work ever produced in the disreputable four-color comics format.

Chaykin's latest project is a graphic novel

(read: big comic) called *Time²* (First Comics again), which he immodestly describes as what you would get "if Damon Runyon and Philip K. Dick were to collaborate on a prime-time soap, with music by Bud Powell and Charlie Parker." Howard was a pioneer of the "graphic novel" (he hates the term) with his adaptation of Alfred Bester's classic science-fiction novel *The Stars My Destination* in 1978, but *Time²*—slated to be the first of at least three semi-annual books—is in a class by itself: a dizzyingly rhythmic narrative set in a dream landscape of nightclubbing lowlifes, where "everyone is either a jazz musician or a thug. It's a fun book," he says, "the kind that makes your mother say, 'let's call Jimmy Swaggart.'"

The world of *Time*², as Chaykin describes it, is built out of "my fantasies and screened memories of New York in the late '40s, the milieu that my parents moved in—

my mother was a second-rate band singer in Brooklyn—which seemed very romantic to me as a child. And it still does, really—the sense of design of the time, the clothing, the music, is all very captivating.”

Chaykin's other big project is a three-issue revival of the Blackhawks for DC Comics (in the same format as the *Dark Knight* resuscitation of Batman last year), which he hopes to have in the stores next spring. Basically it's just another excuse for him to draw guys in zoot suits. Chaykin's Blackhawks will return the Nazi-fighting air-team to their '40s roots.

So why does Howard Chaykin write and draw comics? The boy himself doesn't really have a good answer. By way of explanation he ventures, "I like the form, but I don't have a helluva lot of respect for the content."

—Low Stathis





THEIR INITIAL ALBUM

PAUL KANTNER

RYTHM GUITAR,
LEAD AND BACKGROUND VOCALS

MARTY BALIN

RYTHM GUITAR,
LEAD AND BACKGROUND VOCALS

JACK CASADY

BASS

MARK "SLICK" AGUILAR

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ON ARISTA RECORDS,
CHROME CASSETTES AND COMPACT DISCS

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FLASHES

Greenworld Distribution has filed for **bankruptcy** after being named codefendant, along with Jello Biafra and Alternative Tentacles Records, in an obscenity charge brought by Mary Sierra after she found a poster of **artistically rendered penises** in her 14-year-old daughter's Dead Kennedys album. The company's lawyer says he doesn't know whether the two events are related.

Leasebreakers! Club Clearview in Dallas invited SPIN and spiritual leader Afrika Bambaataa over for a party, and woke up to **cigarette burns** in the carpet and an eviction notice. Seems the Baptist Foundation of Texas, the first lien-holders on the property, didn't like SPIN's anti-fundamentalist stance. **No comment** on what they thought of Bambaataa's performance.

Residents of the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston wanted to **secede** and form their own city, called Mandela. After Red Sox first baseman Bill Buckner's **embarrassing** error in game six of the World Series, who can blame them?

Overdrive: An unidentified man in Arkansas has been arrested for the **highly unlikely** crime of impersonating Randy Bachman, rotund founder of the Guess Who and Bachman-Turner Overkill. The fiend had bought 18 Corvettes, two Rolls-Royces, and ten Broncos, and left a trail of **unpaid hotel bills** across the Southwest before being brought to justice in a children's hospital. Remarkably, this is the **fifth** time someone has impersonated Bachman.

TAKETY YAKS

"All this shit about me being better in the old days . . . that's reactionary thinking from pitiful motherfuckers who weren't even there."

—Miles Davis

"Every morning I walk into the toilet, look in the mirror, and tell myself I'm the baddest motherfucker alive. But I always flush before I leave, so I can't be that bad."

—George Clinton

"I love that 'I've just been fucked' look. I used to have that all the time, but it's harder to see and appreciate when it's yourself, of course."

—Julian Cope

"I'm tired of being blind."

—Stevie Wonder

"Manipulating people is what I'm good at. If that makes me a bitch, OK."

—Madonna

"Robert Palmer was on TV," says Mick Glaisher, drummer of the C.S. Angels, "and he was asked what he was listening to. And he mentioned our album, so we thought we'd ring him up to say thank you. And we told him we weren't very happy with the situation with our record company, and he asked us how we'd like to be on Island."

Rock 'n' roll fairy tales, don't you just love them? There were the C.S. Angels, the English band nobody seemed to love anymore, and all of a sudden a bona fide Famous Person comes along and offers them a record contract. Unsurprisingly, they took him up on his offer and are once again among us with a shiny new record. It's called *Chasing the Shadows*, and they are very happy with it. They even let Palmer do a bit of singing on it.

The Angels originally emerged in the late '70s, and were promptly compared to Echo and the Bunnymen and U2. But they lacked the up-front images of

BORN AGAIN

The C.S. Angels Meet the Savior, and his Name is
Robert Palmer.

those bands. So while others went on to megafame, the C.S. Angels just kept making acceptable records that no one bought. Then they jumped to the small Jive label, known in the UK for pop acts like Billy Ocean and topless model Samantha Fox; Jive wanted chart action. "The idea was to make pop singles," says Steven Fellows. "We got bored with making the strange records and getting rave reviews and nothing else, so we decided to

have a go at selling out. But now we're back again peddling the old stuff."

Sitting in the front room at Glaisher's house in Sheffield, the Angels feel much more comfortable about themselves now that they've abandoned the cynical and pathetically wrong quest for hits. "With *Chasing the Shadows*," says Glaisher, "we've got the opportunity to purge ourselves of the dishonesty we felt about our careers and our

music. We wrote and recorded it very quickly to get some of the energy back into the music that had been lacking."

"I see it in pictorial terms. The bands I used to listen to a lot were bands I could see myself being involved with, visually and in the number of people in the band. I saw Television, they played for an hour and they just stood there, and I thought they were wonderful. Those early images stay with me, and I get pissed off when outsiders try to change it, like when Jive tried to make us into a Top 10 band."

So now the C.S. Angels are on Island, and they have an album they produced essentially by themselves. It's a nice, low-key affair that should win them new friends and bring a few old ones back again. Which is how the best fairy tales end, isn't it?

—David Quantick

Steven Fellows of C.S. Angels might as well face it, he's addicted to love.



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TOTAL AOR GODS

David & David Sponge Free Drinks and Complain a Lot.

at the firefly/we all tell lies. . . .

So begins David & David's lower-case saloon song "A Rock for the Forgotten," one of nine slices of life on *Boomtown*, the pair's debut album. The Firefly is, in fact, a ramshackle bar a few doors south of Hollywood and Vine; it remains a favorite watering hole of the Samless Daves, as David & David briefly considered calling themselves.

At the Firefly, instrumentalist-melodist David Ricketts is working on a Greyhound, while singer-lyricist David Baerwald stares morosely at his shot glass of bourbon and Bud pony chaser. And bitches: "This is a message to the readers of SPIN," he fumes. "That 'hip' can sometimes be spelled with a 'y,' as in 'hypnotized,' as in 'type'—either way it's bullshit. And if you're lookin' for that, you're lookin' for *nothin'.*"

He brightens suddenly. "You're not running an expense account on this thing, are you?" Shaking my head, I place one of the two tens in my possession on the bar and order a Corona. "Oh, barkeep," Baerwald shouts, "can I have another one of these?" Baerwald admits to having received one royalty check so far—for 27¢—from the soundtrack of the film *Echo Park*; Ricketts did the score and his partner did a song.

No wonder they're so bitchy. Ricketts: "I read SPIN recently, and the thing it was concentrating on was all such negative shit—impugning somebody's very *nature* because they make music."

"Exactly," Baerwald agrees. "Fuck you, man—why don't you try it?"

Ricketts rushes to this freelancer's aid. "Well, you got glasses, but otherwise you don't look like Elvis Costello."

"I know I'm taking til this too personally," Baerwald admits. "What it has to do with is a state of mind that I grew up with as a club musician in Los Angeles. It pissed me off then and it continues to piss me off. Because I see good people throwin' themselves away because they're vulnerable, because they can't get past all the stuff."

"Everybody's operating on the fear principle—*everybody*," says Ricketts. "I see the whole thing as one giant defense mechanism. You gotta be cool. What the fuck is cool? Cool is *acting* cool so that nobody sees what's really going on. We're *all* vulnerable, we're *all* scared shitless—even if we wear black all the time and get pissed and smoke a thousand cigarettes a day." (Baerwald is smoking mine at the moment.) "You pick up the *L.A. Times*—this guy is hip, that guy is hip. It kinda pops my cork."

"Hip: H-Y-P," Baerwald reminds us. He watches me pull out my wallet. "Hey, you got another ten bucks—awright."

Ricketts and I switch to Bloody Marys; Baerwald sticks with boilermakers. Ricketts leans close. "I swear to God, we're just like . . . *completely . . . honest*," he confides with a self-deprecating laugh. "Well, it's *true*. We both have like a trillion things workin' on us, and that's what comes up. And we always wanna do a good job. We do what we do, and that's all we're *ever* gonna do."

Ricketts gives me a sincere look. "Hey, can I get some corn nuts?"

—Bud Scoppa

Sincerity on parade: Davids Baerwald (left) and Ricketts.

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THE “SUICIDE SOLUTION” CASE

Lawyers claim they've found something strange hidden in the tracks of Ozzy Osbourne's "Suicide Solution"—strange enough to take him back to court.

The wrongful-death suit, dismissed last August, that charged Ozzy Osbourne and CBS Records with inciting a 19-year-old California man to commit suicide, is expected to be refiled this month in a Los Angeles County court. It alleges that a 28-second instrumental interval on the song "Suicide Solution" contains "masked" lyrics that induced John McCollum of Indio, California, to kill himself in October of 1984.

According to the suit, the following six lines, though sung at one-and-one-half times the normal rate of speech and not immediately intelligible, can be discerned beneath the instrumental section of the song:

Ah know people
You really know where it's at
You got it
Why try, why try
Get the gun and try it
Shoot, shoot, shoot [repeated for about 10 seconds]

The case against Osbourne and CBS was originally filed in the fall of 1985, but was thrown out when the parents of John McCollum were unable in their complaint to state sufficiently any connection between "Suicide Solution" and their son's death. The McCollums were granted 60 days to produce evidence of subliminal messages in the song. To build their case, they hired Steve Williamson of the Institute for Bio-Acoustic Research, a private company that studies the psychological and physiological effects of sound, to study Osbourne's music backward and forward—literally.

Williamson says that not all the words on "Suicide Solution" were immediately intelligible on the master recording. To verify the unclear lyrics, he used a version of the song that appeared on a different live recording, the concert video *The Ultimate Ozzy*, which was recorded a year and a half after McCollum's death. On that version, Williamson claims, he could clearly hear the lyrics.

The suit further alleges that McCollum shot himself while wearing headphones and listening to

the final side on a different Ozzy album, *Speak of the Devil*, and, according to Thomas T. Anderson, attorney for the McCollum family, the song John McCollum was listening to when he shot himself was "probably 'Paranoid,' because that is the last song on the record that was on the turntable." McCollum's body wasn't discovered until the next day, however, which made it impossible to determine which of the album side's four songs he was listening to—if any—when he put a gun to his head and pulled the trigger.

The suit also notes that Riverside County Deputy Coroner Lee Snellings stated in his autopsy report that McCollum "committed suicide by shooting self in head with .22 caliber pistol while listening to devil music." A spokesman from the coroner's office verified the wording of the autopsy report, but Snellings was unavailable for comment as to forensic methods used to determine physical effects of devil music on the suicide victim.

According to Williamson, several hundred hours of listening time and the use of a myriad of technological advancements uncovered the subliminal lyrics and a Hemisync tone, an extremely low-frequency tone that, researchers say, produces relaxation and assists listeners in processing information. Subliminal messages, says Williamson, are most effective when they are used to reinforce one's own desires. They work by bypassing the conscious mind and avoiding critical acceptance or rejection of the information.

Though he does not know of any research indicating that subliminal messages can create new desires in a person, he added, such an effect might be possible with intensive prolonged exposure.

Williamson said that the last line of the six-line passage in "Suicide Solution"—which the suit contends repeats the word "shoot" for 10 seconds—changes to "su, su, su" (repeated for several seconds), which he interprets as the first syllable of the word suicide.

Responding to questions about the reliability of his scientific method, Williamson did not explain how his audio research determined the difference between the alleged lyrics "know" and its aural

equivalent "no," and when asked about it said, "I hadn't noticed [the 'know' spelling in the court papers]. It must be a typo."

According to Williamson, backward-masking—the recording of words intended to be revealed when the record is played backward—does not have any effect on the listener and should not be taken seriously.

He said the words "why try" were found at the end of one of the songs on the album *Blizzard of Oz*, when it was played backward. But, Williamson explained, the pronunciation patterns of certain words and phrases in the English language, when played in reverse can unintentionally produce other words or phrases.

Meanwhile, Sharon Osbourne, Ozzy's wife and personal manager, said she was "stunned and angered" by the new allegations. "It's a blatant, out-and-out lie. It's a total fabrication. It does not exist and that's it. What do they honestly think we do? Sit around a bubble-pot and conjure up all these things? They're insane."

Of the McCollums' lawyer, Osbourne said, "I think he's got a personal vendetta against my husband. That's the way I feel about it. I think it's nothing more than that. I think he's some nice little guy from Indio and he's just trying to make a name for himself on the back of Ozzy."

But what of the allegations? Are there really masked lyrics and subliminal suggestions hidden in the grooves? "Absolutely not. But I would love to meet the person that has discovered this, because he must have an incredible mind and an incredible set of ears."

"No matter what people think about Ozzy, we lead a normal life here. It has brought a great deal of upset to our household, let me tell you. No matter what people may think of my husband, he does have a mother—she does read the newspapers."

After numerous calls, Ozzy's record label, CBS, declined to comment about the case. Attorneys for CBS could not be reached for comment.

—Reporting by Joe Velazquez

And the field

GREETINGS FROM

TIMBUK3

Album & Cassette

featuring

The Future's So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades



I got a job with for my graduation. Holy shit a year later a lot of bad things are going great, and they're only gettin' better. See our great leader speakin' his mind. Picture postcards for the blind—a beautiful scene. My head back & white. I was a poor nigger boy, you'd never understand. You can't make tears disappear through a tight fist. From the bottom of my heart, off the top of my head—words are pulled like rabbits from a hat, but nothing was said. It's just another movie, another song, and dance. We're ripping our sticks together. Tryin' to heal things up now. One spark is all we need to bring a light into this darkness. I'm beggin' you down on bended knees. I wanna go jam. I wanna jump & shout down on the corner where the cats hang out. I remember that producer guy from Hollywood who came and heard you play, he said you were good. It was your one big break—! you would have played your cards a little smarter, by now you'd have it made. Your own TV show, a recording contract—and all you had to do was "lighten up your act." A stairway to the stars! A one-way ticket! Blow dried, bouffant, basic training, cops in drag dressed up like whores, cowboys in pony tails, bankers in bangs, presidents in pompous pompadours. Mommas in mohawks, daddys in dreadlocks, heavy metal goldlocks. Hate mail & love letters, searching for some purpose. Crank call at 3am, thoughtful & wordless. A message at the tone? What can I say? The road is full of dangerous curves, and we don't want to go too fast. After he stiffed a waitress and ran out on his tab, Big Mac had a heart attack in the back of a yellow cab. By the time the sound of the siren said the ambulance was comin' his heart had stopped beatin', but the meter was still runnin'. Life is hard.



SPINS

Grace Jones, Billy
Idol, Swans,
Christmas, Iggy
Pop, Marti Jones,
Taj Mahal,
New Order

Edited by
Glenn O'Brien

Platter du Jour

Grace Jones
Inside Story
Manhattan Records



London Features

People think of Grace Jones as a disco queen. People think of her as Conan the Barbarian's sidekick. As just another James Bond villainess. As a major influence on the world of sunglasses. As a cross between Sonny Liston and Judy Garland.

To some people Grace's greatest contribution was combining the art of hair cutting with the art of topiary, or representational hedge trimming. To some people Grace Jones is the singer who bumped off Ethel Merman.

To me Grace Jones is all of these and more. But she's also a musician. A very smart, very influential, and very artistic musician. She might not be a natural musician, but she's a natural in general. She may have started off faking it, but if you fake it well enough and long enough, you can transform it into the real thing. And Grace has always been smart enough to have the smartest people around her. When she began working with producers Chris Blackwell and Alex Sadkin and with the Compass Point band—Sly Dunbar, Robbie Shakespeare, Barry Reynolds, Michael Chung, Wally Badarou, and Sticky Thompson—she was actually creating a new new wave, blending reggae, funk, disco, haute couture, kabuki, publicity, and an urbane jungle worldview.

Under the direction of art director Jean Paul Goude, Grace Jones also made the first great rock videos—real spectacles that showed that visual song promotion and cinematic art could coexist.

Her last record, *Slave to the Rhythm*, was probably the first album-length remix of a single song. Titled "a biography," it was produced by Trevor Horn, assisted by the Art of Noise boys. It continued Grace's direction of hi-tech dance music, and it reached new heights of lavish sonic extravagance. It was sort of an opera of egoism, an extraordinary manifesto of sensual solipsism. It made Otello, Mailer's *Advertisements for Myself*, and Whitman's "Song of Myself" seem like modest efforts, or efforts of modesty. But it was somehow charming. And its vanity was almost humorously transcendental. It was Grace's *schtick* taken to the next plateau. Remember, she already had made albums titled *Fame* and *Legend*.

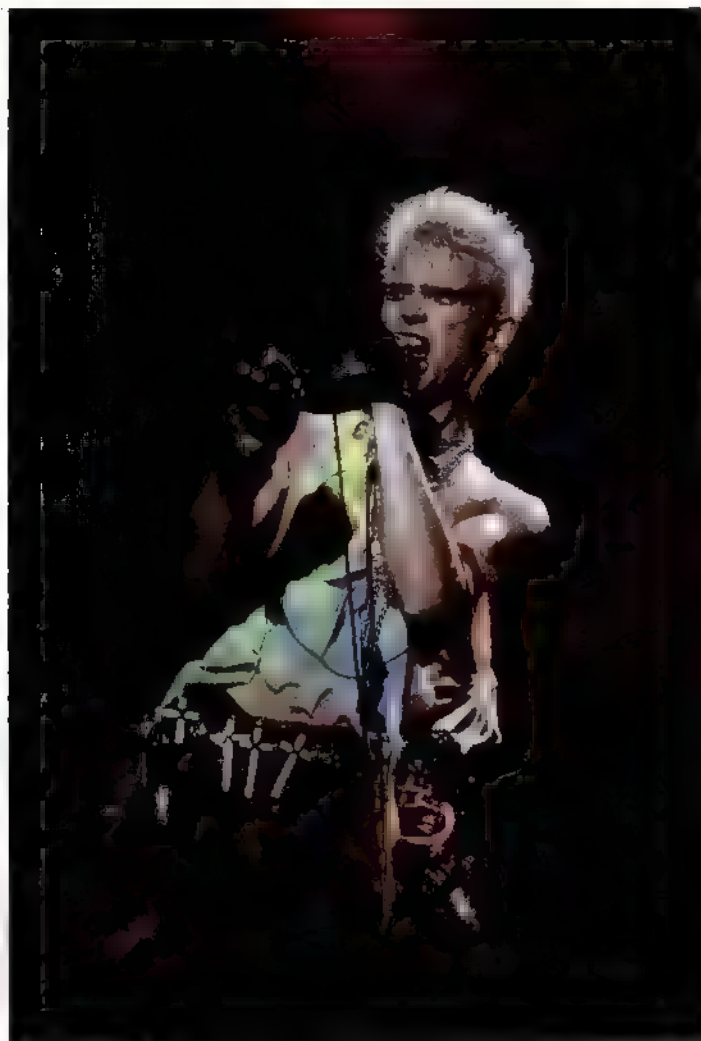
Anyway, in the course of making *Slave*, Grace began writing songs with Bruce Wooley, who cowrote *Slave* and played keyboards and guitars. And out of that collaboration came the songs for her new album, *Inside Story*.

Inside Story is another new direction. Compared to *Slave* it is positively Buddhist in its "centered-

ness" and modesty. It consists of real songs—songs with catchy melodies, contagious rhythms, and good story lines. And for the first time, Grace cowrote all the songs. They're her stories. Sometimes they're a little mean, sometimes they're a little arch, but they're no bullshit.

Inside Story was produced by Nile Rodgers. "So was everything," you might say. But Nile seems to have been interested in the job this time, and he's added a lot more than the polish he's so proficient at providing. It's probably the best stuff he's done since Chic. He did have superior songs to work with, but there's nothing automatic about the way these songs are put together. Grace's start-from-scratch wildness seems to have inspired her collaborators, and the result is a seamless, excellent, party melodrama record. You can dance to it, and you can act really dramatic to it and jump up on your Formica table and do the hustle, the cool jerk, and the sacred steps of Watutsi.

Apparently Grace had two main strategies here. One was to write a story about something she knew about. The title track, "Inside Story," is about her brother being fired as church organist when they were kids because he was too swishy for the church elders. Grace's other strategy was a musical one. She wanted



like a chip off the old ages.

Grace is a treasure because whatever she is, she's always herself. Even when she's phony, she's real phony. And when she's real, she's genius. She's a total original. Even if she attempts to pull off a cliché, she can't help but transform it into something special. And when she tries to do something special, as she's done here, it's pop art at its best. She takes music, and she reinvents it. This is wild, baroque, original, far-fetched, irresistible, grandiose, outlandish, and gorgeous. It might seem like the *Twilight Zone*, but when you get down to it, it's soul music.

—Glenn O'Brien



Billy Idol
Whiplash
Chrysalis

Growing up in public is a tough act, but it's also the hottest ticket of the season. Madonna, Cyndi, and now Billy Idol have all turned corners in their lives and marked these metamorphoses with changes in style and material. For these video pop stars, bravura has been replaced with reflection and love has turned from an obsession into a muse.

Idol's new outlook is packed with remorse and wondering. He steps forward on his new video, "To Be a Lover," with an apology—he "forgot to be a lover." On "Worlds Forgotten Boy," Idol sings with a vaudeville sadness: "My heart is breaking, recorded in sound." On "Sweet Sixteen" he laments that someone's building "candy castles" for his beloved. The curled lip is still visible, but now it's more a trademark than a sign of contempt.

Part of this change of pace is attributable to Idol's personal life and part to attributable to guitarist Steve Stevens. The pairing of the intellecto-guitarist and savant-songster created a fascinating tension on *Rebel Yell*. But now Stevens has stepped forward with some after-school guitar work (check out the George Benson/Barney Kessel tribute on "Man for All Seasons"), and that, combined with producer Keith Forsey's search for rock radio perfection, has resulted in a drier, more teched-out album—one that some Idolizers might consider an inexcusable digression from *Rebel Yell*.

Keith Forsey has kept the tracks clear and impeccably placed. The drums are "chipped" to the max, and there's a mid-

thickness to the sound that is probably the result of a bank of chained keyboards. Despite Forsey's state-of-the-art mix, there is still a blow-dried aftertaste to the LP, as well as some unnecessary baggage.

Though the music may sound a little different from previous Idol solo work, the stance on *Whiplash Smile* is strongly reminiscent of another New York duo—Marty Rev and Alan Vega (aka Suicide). Rev and Vega set the tone for the good, the bad, and the ugly of '80s technopop, and spiritually as well as musically Idol and Stevens stand on Suicide's shoulders to reach a far wider audience. The borrowings are not anonymous. Steve Stevens is a student of the Rev philosophy of riff writing (i.e., turning obvious into dangerous), and the approach is heartfelt on his noodling "Fatal Charm" and "All Summer Single." Idol has gone through Alan Vega's closet pretty carefully, taking the best of his repertoire (i.e., Vega's "hey, babe" phraseology and sewer-rat-as-shaman persona) leaving behind the excess.

But hey, this is the music business—ya snooze, ya lose. If Suicide aren't around to write songs like "All Summer Single," "Sweet Sixteen," and "To Be a Lover," at least Billy and Steve can do it. While Suicide blew itself apart after a couple of records, Idol and Stevens have worked unmercifully on a derivative cosmology. In fact, like all great derivations, Idol and Stevens have developed a set of their own trademarks. Tunes like "Worlds Forgotten Boy" (with its "White Wedding" break) and "Beyond Belief" (with its spiraling "Eyes Without a Face" matinee-styled chorus) are Idol's emulations of himself rather than others.

Besides, if Idol has succeeded commercially, it is not merely from knowing the proper sources, it is from understanding the nature of pop stardom—tip your hat, but keep your eye on the mirror. On "Don't Need a Gun" Idol sings:

*Elvis fought the dying light
Johnny Ray, he's always crying
Gene Vincent, I cry, who slapped
John
And me, I'm moving, moving on*

If there is an essence to *Whiplash Smile*, that's it. Coming of age for a pop star has to be seen in the perspective of performance and history. Every punk has his head turned around by love—it's the nature of the game—but for public punks like Billy Idol or John McEnroe, the metamorphosis is unmercifully scrutinized. Sometimes a young artist like Idol needs this turmoil to fuel him past the magic of youth (and youthful inspirations) into the responsibilities of maturity. Though *Whiplash Smile* is not the fearless and stylized statement of *Rebel Yell*, it is an ambitious and inspiring record that tells more about Billy Idol's future than his past. The ugly little caterpillar who gave us "White Wedding" is emerging from his cocoon as a poetic rock butterfly.

—Rich Stim

to mix things up rhythmically, and most of these songs shift gears at least once—from the Paris bistro to Africa, or from China to Chino-Latino.

Another striking thing about this album is that Grace really sings. On her early albums she often seemed to be on a search and destroy mission for the note. Now she sings with ease. She'll never be Sarah Vaughan, but she has learned that just because you can't be a great singer doesn't mean you can't be a great vocalist. Grace is a great vocalist. She has great tone and inflection. She knows how to be breathy, hushed, and suggestive. She knows how to snarl and growl. And on "Victor," which is basically a jazz song about jazz, Grace actually sings beautifully. She sings straight from her character. As for the notes, well, now she just sneaks right up and hits 'em.

This album sounds like hitsville to me. I don't know about AM radio, but this is going to fill up the dance floor. "Crush" is a great percolating, slinko-pated workout. It's got those tight, edgy, half-hesitant, suspenseful rhythm jams that Nile knows so well. And "I'm Not Perfect" has the right beat and ob-

viously the right message to get the night people on their feet.

There are a lot of great weirdo tunes here too. "White Collar Crime" sounds like a slow hustle tune to me. Maybe it's a rhumba. But Grace sings very strangely, sort of halfway between Billie Holliday and George Sanders. And it really works. "Scary But Fun" is another oddball tune. It's sort of haunting—like melodically and like Halloween. It's got a kiddie innocence and a hard-knocks edge. The title tells it like it is.

"Barefoot" is a real beauty. It's got a great barefeet beat. It cooks, but with a very simple rhythm track. And over the top Grace and a chorus of sisterly voices chant about walking barefoot in Beverly Hills. Grace takes some cool confessional declamation breaks (that are oddly reminiscent of Bob Dylan) while the chorus levitates around her. It's a beauty. And so is "Inside Story," the album's production number. I guess the beauty comes from Grace's real-life-story feelings, but they're translated into a musical complex that's a perfect wedding of the sacred and the secular. It's a real worldlywise gospel tune that rocks

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Swans
Holy Money
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Records by the Swans have so little to do with pleasure, fun, and the, uh, joy of living that it's no off-a-log-fall explainin' why they always suck at my ear like some wax-hungry insect. It sounds dumber than vom to say the Swans are "important" and thus worthy of your time, money, attention; but unfortunately this statement is truth.

Let's face it, power over others (and the potential to acquire the same) is the only motivational cattle prod that can really make people crawl out of bed in the morning. Sleepy-eyed slob shuffling around in the morning sun either want to get their hands on some of that magical force and make the fuckin' meat pups dance to their tune, or they're twitching at the flex of somebody else's strings. Power is the thing, as it were, and no vocal music has ever been about power the way the Swans' is.

This new album, the band's eighth disk, feels like the culmination of the Swans' most recent "suite" of records ("Time Is Money" EP, *Greed* LP, "A Screw" EP, *Holy Money* LP), and as such it contains the ug-wrenchin' (and presumably) definitive versions of three songs released earlier in the set.

"Fool," "Money Is Flesh," and "A Screw (Holy Money)" are all put down with the excruciatingly taut paramilitary precision that has marked the band's recent live shows. And as with martial music, the beat is almost everything here. Melodic inventions are occasionally introduced (most often by mouths), but the essential sound is a pummeling cadence that results when melody, harmony, and rhythm achieve a state of singularity that slowly, steadily consumes everything in its sight. This beat (for lack of a better term) can be made by either drums, guitar, bass, keyboards, or voices; the instruments can operate solo or in groups. The beat can be one simple thrubber or a series of contrapuntal whumps that collide and go crashing off into your mental underbrush. All these combinations are used. And no matter which formula is chosen, the effect is powerful and brutish.

The one exception to this is "You Need Me," which features vocals by Jarboe (the band's female keyboard player) and sounds like the whimper of a victim lying broken on the street. But while this track is set apart from the rest of the album musically, it certainly is of a piece with *Holy Money's* spiritual core.

Singer/songwriter Gira's words here (as elsewhere) are about the fringes and excesses of power at the lowest level. Sick of your boss? Knock him down and buttfuck him. You love me? OK, die for me. These are the sorts of thoughts Gira feels compelled to air in his lower-than-luggy bass. And his wind is housed inside walls hewn of pure fuckin' stone. And it's not real pretty, but it's sure as shit bigger than you.

—Byron Coley



Blacklyn Sorener

Christmas
In Excelsior Dayglo
Big Time

Not so long ago something happened that left its mark on me. I was walking down the street wondering how to dispose of what scratch I had left in my pockets. A salad bar and a tall milk? New soles for the Air Jordans? I didn't know, so I just walked down the stairs to this record store and started flipping through the new arrivals. There was this one record, sort of beige with a picture



of that really expensive stamp, the flip-flopped biplane, in bright colors. Anyway, I got the record, and I took it home, and I put it on, and it blew my mind. It do-si-do'd with my medulla oblongata. It got me thinking. Because that's the Christmas album, Jack, and that's the best thing in the world. Or damned close. Even with their college-radio-play-begettin' "quirkiness," Christmas has, after four years plus, released a debut LP for the annals.

Christmas comes off like the spoiled brat genius of rock on *Dayglo*. Not an unfriendly urchin necessarily; just don't leave the hamsters near the microwave or the keys in the Grand Torino. Christmas joyrides all over both sides of this slab on Liz Cox's slugga-poppa drumming and Mike Cudahy's gnarly guitar. With all the melody in tow, you've got to liken them to a pop band. Happily, their pop's mischief borders on deviance. Sing-along jingles (it is all but impossible not to sing along with Liz) push diesel decapitation as the best way to get attention ("Loved Ones") and Golden Books as read by Genet ("Tommy the Truck" sings "you are dirt beneath my wheels"). Beyond the passing allusions to Hitler's final moments, Kenneth Anger, and pop culture's flotsam, Mike Cudahy's lyrics are clever; his depiction of a happy-sad world where degradation and glee walk hand in hand and shit and beauty are indistinguishable borders on (I say borders on because I really hate to use this word) poetry.

At the very least, *In Excelsior Dayglo* is the best rock 'n' roll record—perhaps the only rock 'n' roll record—on which "aunt" is pronounced awnt. At the very most, it's the best rock 'n' roll record ever. Or damned close.

—Don Howland

Top: Michael Gira of the Swans;
Bottom: A Christmas portrait (L-R)
Michael Cudahy, Dan Salzman and
Liz Cox.



Paul Robichaux

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Iggy Pop
Blah Blah Blah
(A & M)

Iggy Pop is one of our few Perfect Rock Stars. First of all, his adopted name is truly genius. What's even more genius is that he's never made his real name, James Osterberg, Jr., any great secret. We love him for that. We trust a man who allows us a peek at his normalcy. Then, we're happy to be led to believe that his real name is about all that is normal about him. Let's face it, this man's reputation is of the to-hell-and-back variety. Didn't he use to roll around bare-chested on broken glass? Have sex with and get beaten up by the audience during performances? Which is exactly as it should be. We like our rock heroes to live on the edge. Next, he's small and aging. It's important that when one sees a rock star offstage one immediately exclaims, "My God, I didn't know he/she was so *short*!" Age is also important, because a rock star has to be around long enough for us to assess quality or lack of quality.

In addition, Iggy has always been sufficiently avant garde to be either an

influence or a contemporary. The pack has never left him behind. We look forward to each new Iggy record not as the latest embarrassment of a braying relic, but with an enthusiastic curiosity.

One's enthusiasm rises even more with this album when we discover that another Perfect Rock Star, David Bowie, is coproducing (with David Richards), since the Bowie/Iggy combination created excellent results with *Raw Power*, *Lust for Life*, and *The Idiot*. Here, Bowie cowrites many of the songs with Iggy. Steve Jones (remember the Sex Pistols? It's OK, neither do I) cowrites the rest with Iggy. But enough of this blah, blah, blah. . . . Let's hear the latest dear Iggy has stuffed up his sleeve or down his pants . . . which brings us to another area of Perfect Rock Star legend. Ol' Mr. Pop has gained quite a reputation in . . . don't worry, I wouldn't touch this rumor with a . . . oh, forget it.

"Real Wild Child." Remember Chris Spedding's "Wild Wild Women"? Probably not. You should; it's a great song. Take this selection, strip away the "Heroes" sound and the "Great Balls of Fire" seasoning, and you pretty much have it. Give any DJ an extended remix of this, and an entire dance floor will come together . . . and I'm not talking Beatles. "Baby It Can't Fall" is next. Bullshit. The energy certainly does. Just when things should be going somewhere, all gets lost under a cute little recording room technique that makes the voice sound like it's falling. Get it? Better yet, skip it. By the end, the mix is such a swampthing, I think I'm listening to Sgt. Pepper. And I *do* mean the Beatles. "Shades" is a sweet love ballad. Very Bowie in texture. The words are the best—sort of an ode to a pair of sunglasses. Of course this is all very symbolic and merely a coy literary device

to explain what our hero *really* needs to get turned on . . . blah, blah, blah. . . . Imagine Lou Reed at his most innocent (remember "Perfect Day"?). Come to think of it, didn't Bowie produce that too?

*You were my flag
Life's not a drag
I like these shades*

An airplane takes off, and a sound reminding one of Procol Harum's "A Salty Dog" opens up "Fire Girl." We're back on the dance floor again.

*I love you when you lost your raincoat
I'll love you when you lose your fears*

Here come those words again. Lord, it's over too soon. "Isolation" is the essence of Phil Spector. Is that Bowie on sax? I'm such a pushover for sax. This song certainly gets a kick in the ass from it.

Side two begins with the single "Cry for Love." I must say that this sounds more like a Billy Idol number than the latest Billy Idol does. Things get pretty strange with "Blah, Blah, Blah." This is kind of Alan Vega meets a beatbox gone hick. The words sound like a year's worth of the evening news all shrushed together. Not for the fainthearted. We're then Morse-coded into "Hideaway," which bemoans the modernization of towns and industry's demonic effect on the country and then dreams of escape. I guess Iggy needs more than mere shades by this point. In the background a guitar is playing the first line from "Running Scared," and all I can think of is Dean Stockwell doing "Candy Colored Clown" in *Blue Velvet*, so I get spooked and space out and, what do ya know, it's the closing track, "Winners and Losers." Wake up time! Hit the dance floor again, my tender little porkbellies. We're back in production—Pepperland once more. As for the lyric:

*She gave me money
She gave me head
She gave me everything
And then she went dead*

Iggy, You're too much.

This isn't the best Iggy Pop album ever. Bowie's influence tends to bury him to such a degree that this easily could have been a Bowie album (and not his best either). Not that I have anything against Bowie. He's a Perfect Rock Star. It's just that I feel very chauvinistic when it comes to Iggy because I'm from Michigan, so he's my Bruce Springsteen. If Bowie produced Springsteen like this, the entire state of New Jersey would go berserk. Now don't get me wrong, this record is filled with many wonderful moments. It's just that this is the equivalent of having a little coffee with your sugar.

—Anita Sarko

Iggy Pop, a Perfect Rock Star



Marti Jones
Match Game
A & M

Marti Jones has the sort of thick, honey-eyed voice you could spread over homemade biscuits: Dusty Springfield with a little Sandy Denny and Jackie DeShannon on the side. *Unsophisticated Time*, last year's debut, was an unqualified delight, a wonderful sampling of songs by good pop writers like Peter Holsapple and producer Don Dixon. *Match Game*, her second album, follows the same formula but with less success. Don Dixon, who brought such a light touch to her first record and put a spin on albums by Dumptruck and the Smithereens, is strangely heavy-handed here, long on bombast and short on playfulness.


Part of the problem is the material. The inclusion of songs by Marshall Crenshaw, Richard Barone, Liam Sternberg, Dwight Twilley, and David Bowie must have seemed like a good idea on paper, but on vinyl none of them quite works: the songs run out of steam on the way to the bridge and never recover. Marti Jones has sure instincts and impeccable, intelligent phrasing, but she's too much of a fan, too aware of the sources, to completely inhabit the songs. She tries them on as if they were her best friend's clothes, admiring the stitching, knowing all the while they don't really fit, that they were made or bought for someone else.

The songs have the classic pop form without the musical or emotional undertow that draws you back to them, that implants them firmly in your head whether you want them there or not. These are the ghosts of pop songs; you see them in the half-light, tiptoeing down the hall in their bell-bottoms; you look away, and they're gone.

There are exceptions. Elvis Costello's "Just a Memory," with its guitar figure from "Here Comes the Night" and its Burt Bacharach melody, is a chilling little song, beautifully sung, and all of Don Dixon's songs, particularly "Be Myself Again," cowritten by Jones, are fresh and buoyant.

If she can't do a whole album of Dixon's material, then at least get this girl some songs by Peter Holsapple or Jackie DeShannon or P.F. Sloan. After all, with a voice like this, one sha-la-la-la's worth a thousand words.

—Brian Cullman



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Taj Mahal Taj Gramavision

A few years ago I was producing a blues and country singer, Lucinda Williams, in a small studio in New York and heard that Taj Mahal was passing through town, doing a little recording (for this album, as it turns out). I got the idea they should record together, and I tracked him down at his hotel. He was skeptical but amused and flattered that he'd been sought out, and after renegotiating his fee (we upped coffee and a donut to a bottomless cup and two donuts), he agreed to come over.

He appeared the next morning a little after 11, a big man in an oversized jacket and floppy beret, nodding his head and chomping on an unlit stogie. He listened to the song, a traditional blues, that Lucinda wanted to record with him; he sat very still, but his hands folded and unfolded over each other constantly, and when he'd heard enough to know that she was serious, that there was a real spirit moving inside her, he lost his suspicious look and got down to business, tapping out a counter-rhythm with his foot, redirecting her phrasing by tilting his head or bearing down with a slide guitar part. And within half an hour it was a different piece of music; a tired old blues had come back to life, and deep inside it you could hear the hellhounds barking and wailing.

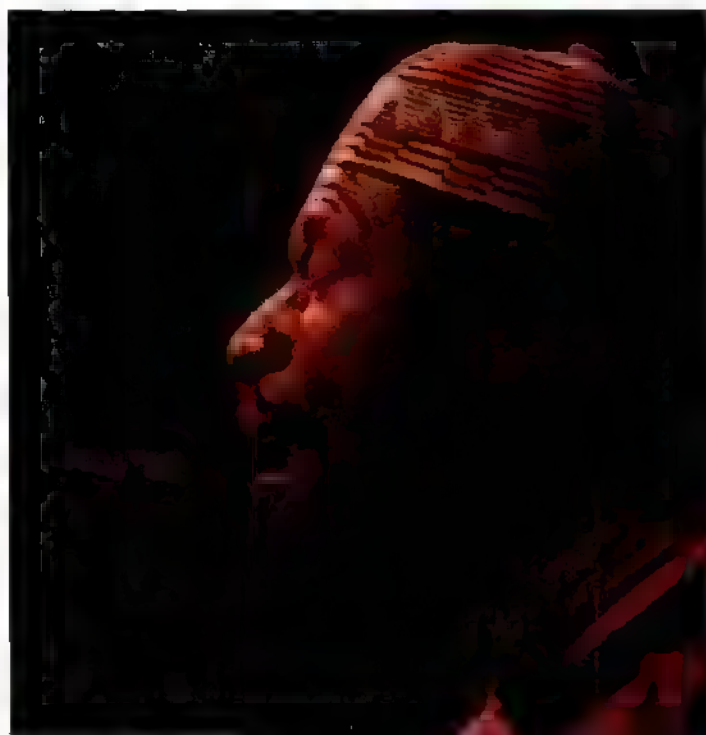
That's what Taj does on his own records. He'll resurrect strange old songs, take a reggae number that strikes his fancy, find a second-rate pop song that has some first-rate changes in it, and filter them, reprocess them, find that little spark that made the songwriter write

them in the first place and fan it into a full-grown flame.

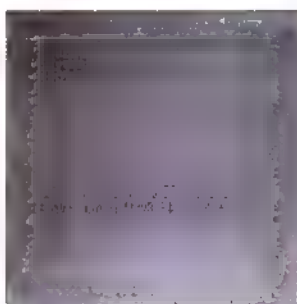
Taj, his first album in about eight years, is a little more studied, a little less casual than his earlier records, and at first glance seems pretty unpromising: synthesizers, drum machines, and a version of Sylvia Robinson's disco hit "Pillow Talk" don't bode well. But Taj's juju is more powerful than any technology; when he walks into a room, drum machines shudder and shut off, synthesizers roll over on their backs and wave their legs in the air, and vapid, mediocre little songs surrender their identities and take on a whole new life, a whole new meaning.

Taj (the album) is overarranged, overproduced, without the offhand beauty of his acoustic records or the texture and depth of his work on Kip Hanrahan's recent tribute to Ishmael Reed (*Conjure on American Clave*). But Taj (the man) seems able to transcend any obstacle in his path; he's almost too powerful a force to be contained on a record. He flirts with calypso, covering soca singer the Mighty Shadow's populist anthem "Everybody Is Somebody," dips down to a Barry White-ish voice for "Pillow Talk," and glides his way through "Soothin'," a ballad by Jae Mason, a big guy who used to be the bouncer outside the Bottom Line. Throughout, Taj hums and growls and grunts and sings in and out of tune, and somehow it doesn't matter; he walks happy, sailing along with a joy and a strut and a style that transcends the material, fashion, and time, that makes me want to go over and shake his hand and buy him another couple of donuts.

—Brian Cullman



Jeffrey Mayer/Norbow Photography



New Order Brotherhood Quest

As you probably know, there are other dimensions besides our own. In these other dimensions, people who look just like us do similar things and even take up the same space as we do. But because they are in another dimension, we can't really see or hear them. Sometimes, when I go to record stores or dance clubs, I can sense the other dimension. I can sense that something like music is being played and something like dancing is going on.

In this other dimension, New Order's *Brotherhood* is going to be a big smash. It will fly up the other dimension charts and probably be so big that I'll begin to wonder if my dimension isn't the other dimension.

The main problem is that my world is too crowded to accommodate New Order. If I want moody, layered British dance/rock with an arresting vocal style, I've already got Richard Butler and the Psychedelic Furs. If I want dirgelike lyric sensibility over moody chords and a drum machine, I've already got Andy Eldridge and the Sisters of Mercy. And if I want Lou Reed-styled vocals over a din of instrumentation, I've got a whole pile of Lou Reed and Velvets records (FYI: check out "Every Little Counts" for the latest in VU simulation).

For the most part, *Brotherhood* is a lot of order and not much new—exactly the kind of stuff that is so appeal-

ing to radio and MTV, because it hints at being daring but is unrepentantly predictable and devoid of soul. I support synthesizers as much as the next guy, but after a couple of spins, you wonder if the New Orderlies should plug their fingers into the sockets instead of the DX-7. "All Day Long" and "Bizarre Love Triangle," with their endless arpeggios, sound more like overbaked ELO or Yes than a new-age dance band. As for the drum programming, with the exception of "Angel Dust" and "All Day Long," the beat comes out of reflex rather than a sense of rhythm.

NO's stylistic stance is equally problematic. Hiding behind an anonymous pop persona (the album cover is an industrial blank), the band espouses a tragic lyricism over a technopop arrangement. The lead vocalist exists in a world where he's not grown up and he's not a boy—a world where we "feel no pain and no joy." On "Bizarre Love Triangle" he sings:

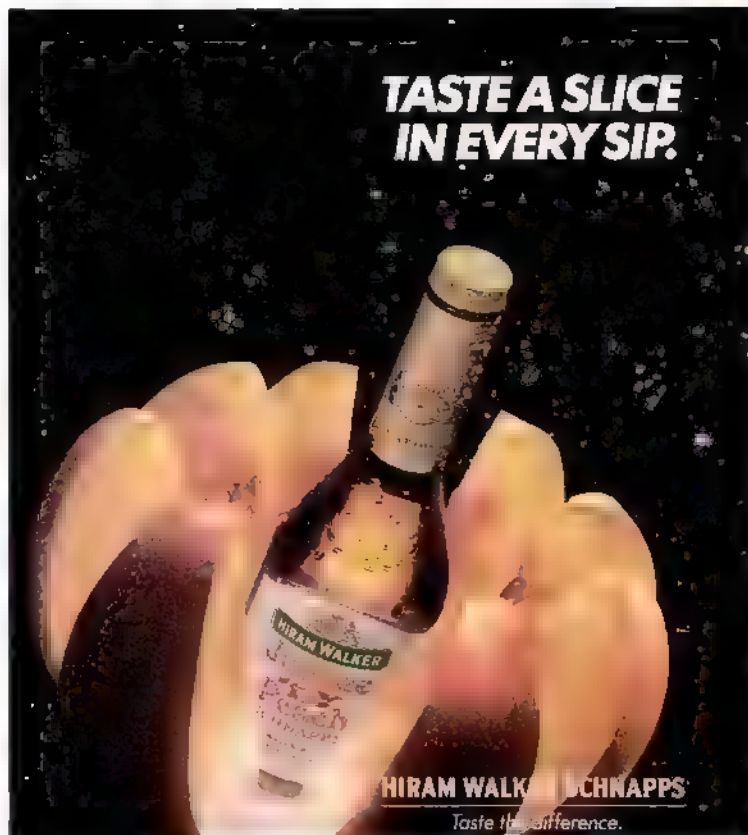
*I feel fine, I feel good
I feel like I never should
Whenever I get this way
I just don't know what to say
Why can't we be ourselves like we
were yesterday*

Maybe they dig this kind of Psych 101 poetry in the other dimension, but combined with the disco drums and the buckshot synth work, the whole package leaves one longing for the honest superficiality of Stacy Q.

Despite all the danceable pretensions, there is some socially redeeming value to *Brotherhood*. "Paradise" and "Weirdo" are catchy tracks with inoffensive arrangements. In addition, the group produced the LP themselves, so we can assume they're happy with it (and that's worth something). But for the most part, New Order is an unnecessary excursion on the road of pop music—unless, of course, you're traveling to the other dimension.

—Rich Stim

New Order flocks together for their latest offering: *Brotherhood*.



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UNDERGROUND

Column by Andrea Enthol

Under the pump of every blow-dried British haircut heartthrob sits a pile of dollar bills, and under those dollars lies the fragile American underground. Some people think it's pro-American rock to be anti-British. Those people don't understand that the health of UK music in the US is what keeps the American underground alive.



Paul Brubaker

That there's an interrelationship between British and American music is no secret. Brits have been going gaga over American rock since it was born. In return, Americans have taken "made in the UK" as a trademark of quality. They've also turned to England to start American careers. Before the release of their British album, **Throwing Muses** were one of Boston's trendy-endorsed local bands. They hung out with the right people, who got them the right publicity, which made other bands on the Boston scene hate their guts.

So they opted to release their first album in England, on the gauze-and-dreamscapes label 4AD. That album, simply titled *Throwing Muses*, is a surreal and moody slice of arty rock that alternates fiery hoedown rhythms with folky strumming, warped nasal yodels, and a sparse grandeur

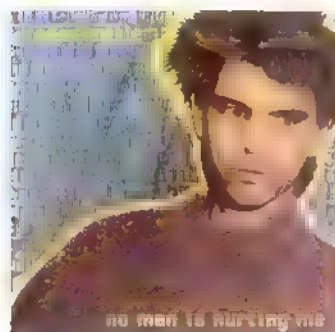
that make it easy to see how one person might love and the next loathe them after listening to the same track.

Kristin Hersh has a voice somewhere between the yowling, clear style of amateur uppy and a seal calling to its mate. Squirmy and quirky, with a deliberate quaver, it cracks in its high range and falls off pitch with a scraping grumble in the low, as if dragging along the bottom of the music staff like cans tied to the back bumper of a newlywed couple's car. That weirdly warm voice is backed by clear, simple guitar lines and by female choruses that swell angelically, as on "Stand Up," or wander off in anti-harmony. No wall of production disguises the sound of this three-woman-and-one-man crew. In 4AD tradition, the percussion is prominent. With an ice-cool layer of echo, it stands above most of the mix.

If there's a message to the band's musings, it's buried six feet under

metaphors in lines like "Follow the road. Swallow a snake. Find shoes in the corner. Run away." But heck, Hersh sounds good saying it. So what if the album doesn't provide your minimum daily dose of literature? It's got a warbly, untraditional charm of its own. You can find 4AD records wherever imports are sold. Their address is 19 Alma Rd., London SW18, England. Their record can also be obtained from Ken Goes, Box 951, North Dartmouth, MA 02747. "Fish," a non-LP track by the Muses, is available on a flexidisc for \$2 with issue 2 of the fanzine *Great Recipes* for *Hahd Times*, Suite 105, P.O. Box 9038, Waltham, MA 02254.

Fellow scenester **Roger Miller** didn't leave Boston to release his first solo LP. He had prehistoric credentials in that town. As a well-known member of both Mission of Burma and Birdsongs of the Mesozoic, he had automatic acceptance in his home city. Beyond Boston, the curse of the synth keeps him among the unsung of the underground. *No Man Is Hurting Me* is a synthesizer album full of fast-moving screeches, squawks and squeals, chunky, fuzz-crusted electrochords, and a clarinet that sounds like a lovesick iron gate. Beneath this cornucopia of twitters



and textures, Miller and his companions lay down a very human beat with African-inspired drumming, real cymbals, tom-toms, saxophone, and even keyboards. *No Man Is* is a thunderous rhythm fest. Clanking and pounding, echoing and squealing with sweeping, streaked shards of sound, Miller lays down complex instrumentals that travel between speakers in a way no humanly limited guitar locked in a studio isolation booth ever could. A real recorded train pulls into Kenmore Station. A synthesized companion joins it, throwing sparks from its imaginary wheels all over the song. Backwards chords march in rhythm, and oscillators twist in agony. The synthesizer has gotten a reputation as a limited instrument because too many musicians limit their imaginations when they design synth sounds. Freed from imitating drums, electric organs, strings, and horns, the

synthesizer can be as wild and emotional as a roller coaster, creating sounds and textures no ear has heard before. Miller has the vision to twist those tones into music, instead of hollow android howlings, and he has a sense of humor to go with his sense of melody. Just check out his version of the other Roger Miller's "King of the Road." His current and previous work can be found on Ace of Hearts Records, P.O. Box 579, Kenmore Station, Boston, MA 02215.

Ask Austin, Texas's, **Cargo Cult** what they have to do with England, and they'll probably shrug. Their lightly fuzz-coated guitars and rawly sung vocals with recited interludes have the kind of theatricality found in the British band Bauhaus, but not much in common with any specific Bauhaus song. Vocalist Randy Turner goes for the dramatic. Scraped yowls followed by slowly crawled passages where just he, one guitar, and a sparse drum characterize his style. Halloween fascinates Cargo. Little skulls, skeletons, a black cat, and kitschily costumed folk are all over their liner notes. Death, hell, rats, and pain are favorite lyric themes. Their sound owes a debt to traditional punk for its heavy drum style and to punk's more contemporary cousin for its metallically scraping squeal-guitar. Mostly, Cargo spins tunes with a delicate clarity on *Strange Men Bearing Gifts*. It's a sparkingly produced album of texture, tempo, and tonal changes. From the softly scratchy choruses in "Empty House" through the dramatic jungle drumming, grunted chants, moans, and swirling spiraled feedback whistle in "Pimp Posse," it's an album that moves and flows and changes throughout its long and twisting groove. It's available through Touch and Go Records, P.O. Box 433, Dearborn, MI 48121, which is in turn available to stores through most import distributors in the US.

The indie/import connection grew up with the punk boom of the late '70s, though they had nothing to do with each other beyond being in the same place at the same time. Because importers were distributors and not creators, and independent labels were creators without distribution, their relationship was naturally symbiotic. That relationship helped to make it possible for Mission of Burma to be more than some Boston bar band. Recent lawsuits under section 602 of the 1978 copyright law—known as the parallel importing law—are threatening the indie/import connection. Unknown American bands—like **Two Small Bodies**—will pay the price.

There are three full-sized people behind Two Small Bodies, a grungy whoopabill ensemble that combines the spook and roots influences of the Cramps with Kentucky country/blues. They've embossed that combination onto one small single, "Salty Dawg." With a drum pulse so

softly clacked that it sounds like it could have been pounded on two extra-firm pillows, and a deep guitar crawl that burbles in pools of bluesy darkness then squeals up to another backwoods whoop, they pop that ole country question in the kind of southern-fried accents you expect to hear over a bowl of grits. They can be found by contacting Splat! Records Ltd., 127 Prall St. #1, Lexington, KY 40508.

The parallel importing law was designed to prevent an entrepreneur from competing head-to-head with

in "sensitive" imports put at risk under the parallel importing law. A couple of months later, one of the oldest distributors in the US, Greenworld, also ceased operations.

Neither Greenworld nor Caroline of California were major forces, but the trend their dissolution may foreshadow is a monster to be watched with fear. The difference between the underground of the early '70s and early '80s is distribution. Destroy distribution and you destroy the future of music.

Our future is in little bands. Except for

rare industry concoctions (such as Asia or Blind Faith), every band starts underground and looks hesitantly toward the future, knowing that the odds are tremendously against their surviving to be heard by more than relatives and friends. Album covers, label affiliations, and band names all create expectations that must be offset or met. The front cover of **Sand in the Face's** debut album is as misleading as **Two Small Bodies'** name. On it the band, in tough-guy leather jackets and floppy, trend-happy haircuts, stand before an airbrushed skyline of *Miami Vice* pastels. Around

"schemes." But you get a lot more of something you'd never expect from a band named after brain cells: guitars. Fierce and fuzzy, slashing at 100 miles a minute over a slam-speed drum, they fuse the fury of punk with the seething of '60s-inspired psychedelia to create six searing tracks on the album *Take It Back*. From punk they've stolen their vocal style: a hoarse and heavy shout that barely tries to couple the lyrics to musical notes. From psychedelia they've borrowed an altered paranoia, which surfaces in the track "Head."

A hypnotically swirling scatter,



American releases by buying a US title from a country where monetary exchange rates or labor laws make it possible to sell the records for less. It was never intended to prevent the importing of records unavailable in the US, but that's how it's being used. In March, Caroline Records Inc. of New York was sued for importing certain CD titles whose copyright was held by US companies. At the time American companies were often unable to fulfill demand for CDs. Caroline settled out of court, and in the aftermath of the lawsuit, its sister company, Caroline Records of California, folded because its business



J.D. Van Hoos



Bill Leisner

them float new-wave rectangles, but theirs isn't an album of carefree videopop. The wave they're on is tidal. Sand in the Face's music is nyarl-guitar punk. With ranting rhythm vocals and hard-pounding drums, Sand crunches through short and simple three-chord bashes and passages of sinew guitar. When they have vocals, they play for speed and energy. You can bring their spiky, unschooled energy into your own home by contacting the Independent Label Alliance, P.O. Box 594M, Bay Shore, NY 11706.

With a name like **Gray Matter** you expect some kind of college-educated pop: thesaurus words that exist only for vocabulary quizzes and thinky-feely introspection with a liberal arts degree. You get a little of that when Gray Matter rhymes "confusion" with "illusion" and "dreams" with

"Head" shivers in wild hysteria and leaps from the speakers with hell-bound screams. If you've ever seen a child sobbing and gasping in convulsive tears, you'll understand Matter's power as their guitars suddenly pare down to a whisper of slowly slithered sinews, then burst with even more ferocity just when you thought they'd fade. And you'll understand the emptiness of the record's ending: there's a clank and everything stops, like a broken-bottle slash to the jugular, leaving an awful, empty silence. That silence comes from Dischord Records, 3819 Beecher St. NW, Washington, DC 20007.

I can be contacted at P.O. Box 4904, Panorama City, CA 91412.

Left: *Throwing Muses*; Below right: *Cargo Cult*; Above right: *Two, count 'em, Two, Small Bodies*.

See also: [Ergonomics](#)

[illegible]

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RICHARD LLOYD REANIMATOR

The first thing Richard Lloyd does in the morning, before he showers, brushes his teeth, or has his morning tea with lemon, is play guitar. He reaches out of bed in his New York apartment, turns on the television, turns down the sound, and plays. Lloyd's '61 Strat is an iridescent green, one of the "colors of the rings around the planet Saturn," he says. His apartment is considerably less elaborate, although I can't tell you much more about the place because Lloyd and his management wouldn't let me interview him there. "You wouldn't be comfortable," said Lloyd's manager, Jim Fouratt.

After he has lunch at a coffee shop near his place, it's more guitar. After dinner, the same thing, until he goes to sleep around 3 A.M.

"But don't print that," says Lloyd. "I think it's dull." Dull and provocative. The classy image of the guitar hero basking in his obsession is brilliant in its dullness. So is Richard Lloyd. Artistic license being what it is, he can change personas quickly, especially when the topic is rock 'n' roll. Anyway, he shouldn't worry about being dull, because once he starts to play guitar, the matter is settled.

It's hard for Lloyd to remember the best times of his life. Not because his memory isn't good, but between then and now a lot's happened that he'd rather forget: drug addiction, alcoholism, a nervous breakdown, and a long, self-inflicted campaign to clean himself up. His recent, well-received return to recording—the U.S. release of his album *Field Of Fire*—a new band, and a successful series of concerts, including an audience stunner at New York's Ritz, have not erased the past. Ironically, or rather expectedly, his rebound fame has called attention to it.

"You can ask questions about the drug thing, and we do want it in the story, but we just don't want it to be the whole story," Lloyd's manager instructs me before the interview, and I have to agree with him. Lloyd's drug problems have been the most impressive part of any story that's been written about him for the past five years.

Richard arrives at the SPIN offices for the interview in black, except for a red flannel shirt and white socks. His only nervous habit is scratching his left hand. He is somber about all topics except music—past or present—which can get him to laugh, tell great stories, or offer sharp opinions.

Originally the guitarist intended to be a drummer, because he was the kind of kid who was always banging things. Every Christmas his parents bought him one drum, but by the time he got the whole set, he'd lost interest.

When Lloyd was 16 a guy named Velva introduced him to Jimi Hendrix, and he spent the rest of his teen years hanging out around a guitar god, studying Hendrix's every move, trying to figure out "what he had that made him so special." Lloyd and Hendrix never became friends but, he says with pride and self-amusement, "I got to be the mouse in the room."

Soon, however, Hendrix began thinking that this teenager who was so quietly observing him was actually patronizing him, and one night he punched Lloyd in the nose. At the time, Lloyd understood this to mean that the guitar god was handing him the great legacy of the instrument. He shakes his head now at the



Leslie Franklin

What's it like
to outlive
your own demise?

Article by Annette Stark

thought and laughs at his own foolishness.

Lloyd is always trying to get close enough to people to "penetrate their auras," to find out what they have that makes them succeed. In this way he has discovered that self-assurance, a great willingness to succeed, and carrying a guitar all the time are of equal importance.

"Back then everyone carried a guitar. The object was never to be caught without one, so you had to drag the thing around. It meant you had a purpose in life."

In the mid-'70s, Lloyd joined Tom Verlaine to form the band Television, a forerunner of the early New York new wave movement.

"Those were happy days . . .," he says. "There was a cohesiveness to that whole movement. There were the bands—us, Talking Heads, Blondie, The Ramones, Mink Deville—and there were the managers and the kids who hung around. Then, because of that,

there was the whole magazine thing—*New York Rocker*, *Punk*. We used to invite the press down to rehearsals, give them a gallon of wine, and say 'Listen.'"

Lloyd had a great time, renting places to play, making up the publicity signs, rehearsing in Chinatown, and playing in one of the first New York bands to get involved in "fucking the existing system." A hit record and major cult status followed, and Lloyd and Verlaine were soon appreciated for their individual, innovative guitar styles. Then Malcolm McLaren took the whole idea back to England, and a funny thing happened. The fun stopped.

Lloyd released his first solo album, *Alchemy*, and the critics did not rave. He and Verlaine developed their relationship to the point it is today: "We say hello to each other. That's about it. Basically, we are both very strange people. I am very intense, and I always demand that of other people. I guess the drugs supplied me with that intensity for a while." So did alcohol, and by the time of *Alchemy*'s release, Lloyd had acquired addictions to both.

"My drug and alcohol habits have been well documented," he says impatiently, and he won't answer further. It's not that he's trying to be evasive or private. He's simply trying to forget.

"I just want to put that behind me, OK?"

OK. Lloyd says that every day he goes to meetings "of various support groups," and you're supposed to understand that these are AA and drug counseling sessions—meetings he's used to bring his life to where it is finally OK.

Now he sits so calmly and controlled that it's hard to imagine he ever had a problem with anything in his life. He wears the weary look of a guy who's seen more than he'd like to, but he reanimates whenever the subject returns to music.

On the cover of his new album, *Field Of Fire* (previously it was only available in Sweden), Lloyd is sitting on cellar stairs that look suspiciously like CBGB's. The picture could have been taken ten years ago because Lloyd doesn't look like he's aged one day, but it's a recent photo, shot downstairs at Maxwell's, a current musicians' hangout in Hoboken, New Jersey. "Same spirit," he says and admits to going there often. Richard still needs to hang out around music as much as he did when he was a kid.

Field Of Fire has the critics' blessings this time and has a good chance of changing people's memories of Lloyd. It's a happier project, more optimistic and less nasty than anything he did with Verlaine. He's become deeply religious, which is reflected in the positive outlook of *Field Of Fire*. The album is upbeat; on one song, "Black to White," he describes a place in Sweden that's so bleak it's 20 below zero, but it's still "a nice place to go to think things out." The guitar is perfect, the leads compelling. The songs are at once stories and beautiful guitar-lovers' songs that sometimes sound like Springsteen and sometimes sound like Lou Reed, but mostly sound like Lloyd (to people who remember what Lloyd can sound like at his best).

You can compare him to other people if you'd like. Lloyd doesn't really mind. Although if you call him a guitar hero like Hendrix, or anyone else, Lloyd just shrugs it off. All that guitar-hero stuff, well, it's boring. ☛



Wolf

Singles

More reasons to listen to jazz

Column by John Leland

Bon Jovi is No. 1; anti-crack and anti-porn hysteria have generated movements; wide lapels are back; Ric Ocasek has another solo album; and the NFL has neutered the game in order to project a myth of law and order. The forces of good are in retreat. And despite the success of Run-DM.C., radio formats continue to draw a tighter line on rap music. Rappers have responded by ignoring radio and making raw street records. This means the end of the crossover compromise and confers both a liberation and an obligation on the artists. What's the point of making sweet underground records? So you get a lot of violence and sexuality on records, and also a lot of sexism. Not to mention a lot of anti-crack hysteria and more samples from Bob James's "Mardi Gras" than you can shake a stick at.

Anita Baker: "Caught up in the Rapture" b/w "Mystery" (Elektra)

The keepers of the black cultural keys have burdened Anita Baker, along with Freddie Jackson and Luther Vandross, with the onus of resurrecting sweet soul music. Which is unfair. Baker has neither the emotional muscle nor the direct language to carry this weight. She does, however, make very satisfying, very pretty, bourgeois pop soul records, and this is one of 'em. Baker uses her limited repertoire of intonations with enough finesse to create a semiotician's dream of signified elegance. "Caught up in the Rapture" neatly avoids telling: (a) What it's like to be caught up in the rapture of love (other than that it's magical); (b) Why she's caught up in it (other than that she knew it would happen from the first time she met the guy); (c) Who has

her in the rapture; and (d) What the hell she's going to do about it. Does being caught up in the rapture interfere with everyday life? Show us some faces, Anita, tell us what they said.

Aretha Franklin: "Jumpin' Jack Flash" b/w "Integrity" (Arista)

Tiredass pomp that does more to reinforce the idea of the Rolling Stones as deadweight than the entire *Undercover* album. In this new argument, even the Stones' old material rates as arena schlock fit for an aging R&B singer to oversing. And she does. To Franklin's credit, she pounds this baby into the ground with authority. If the Stones were to remake *Exile* now, it'd suck; so you can imagine how wrong producer Keith Richards is in resurrecting "JJ Flash." The irrelevancy blues ain't nothing but

a good song redone bad. Stick a fork in it; "Jumpin' Jack Flash" is done. A fan can only wish she'd done the Jesus and Mary Chain's "Upside Down" instead.

DJ Jazzy & Fresh Prince: "Girls Ain't Nothing but Trouble" (Word-Up)

DJ Jazzy Jeff and Fresh Prince featuring Ice Cream "Tee": "Guys Ain't Nothing but Trouble" (Word-Up)

Lesson No. 1: current hip hop economics promotes sexism. An anti-female rap record provokes an anti-male answer record; the two as a package get more airplay than they could separately, and an astute producer can score two hits with one idea. Pretty neat. Which is maybe why, since "La-Di-Da-Di," the former studs of the microphone have been complaining about women's sexual appetites. Fear of sex makes a good battle position.

On the first record the fellas have two nasty encounters with horny females. One woman cries rape when the man rejects her advances; the other turns out to have a large boyfriend who arrives on the scene at an inopportune time, chasing our man out of the Gucci sheets and buck-nekked into the snow. Ice Cream "Tee"'s female response is no less stereotyped in its view of women: "We like to be wined and dined by candlelight." But it is a funnier record. Specially because, after she learns that her date intends to put her to work on the Deuce, she pulls a Smith & Wesson. These are both excellent records, but if this is really what love is about, you gotta wonder why anyone bothers.

Anna Domino: "Summer" (Les Disques du Crepuscule import)

Remixer Arthur Baker inflates Anna Domino's least idiosyncratic song into a thoroughly schlocky pop dance single. Domino's good stuff gives you a reluctant look into a private world that's both intriguing and uncomfortable: you wanna see what's in there, but you don't wanna be around when she falls to pieces. "Summer" doesn't do this, and for that, it isn't a very interesting record. This beat is too big, too insistently the bully of the present, for this to work as a bittersweet look at the past. As a bit of gentle neo-Motown pop it ain't bad; at least it's not obnoxious. But there are better things to hum on a clear afternoon.

Was (Not Was): "Robot Girl" b/w "Earth to Doris" (Mercury import)

Even back on the anthemic "Out Come the Freaks," Was (Not Was)'s approach to dance music was more cultist than crossover: the work of a couple of white guys who owned a lot of disco 12-inches and saw the potential for experimentation within a dance mix. Like Adrian Sherwood or George Clinton, they jam ideas around a beat. Unlike Devo or the B-52's, they don't call attention to their artiness. The result is a contradiction:

around a musical constriction—the rigid computer beat—the Was brothers dance their way out of their constrictions. This bit of hard disco comes with a catchy chant, some slippery extended funk chords, a lot of drums, and a shadow of misogyny: “She vacuums the carpets and doesn’t complain/She’ll walk the dog in the pouring rain.” Better when they addressed the Reagan age with the plea, “Tell me that I’m dreaming.” I like it anyway, but I’m not proud of this fact.

Crew Devastation: “We’re All Going to Heaven” (Gitten)

Well, I’ll be. Crew Devastation challenge Doug E. Fresh’s claim to have made the first religious rap (“All the Way to Heaven”) and threaten to kick his ass for ripping them off. Of all the etc., etc. As if this were a distinction worth battling over. Message here being, you can’t front on God. And who’s to argue with that? A sorta okay record, but pretty baffling.

B. Fats: “Woppit” (Posse)

Slow, all the way lean piece of funky rap. Like Joeski Love’s “Pee-wee’s Dance,” this is an instructional record. Pure product for now dancers. And like any good dance craze record, it exalts its audience more than its rapper. “The wop dance is not hard to do/Matter fact it’s easier than the boogaloo/You just move your head up and down/And roll your fists around and around/Then you kick your feet to the funky beat/Then you get a little bolder, you add your shoulder/The music’s grooving, your body’s moving/There’s one more thing that must be included/That’s the hand-claps, that’s the key to it all/Then you



Tom Fugh

put it all together you be having a ball/Doing the wop.” Sounds easy. But most encouraging is B. Fats’s modesty: “If I can do it, you can do it too.”

Kool Moe Dee: “Go See the Doctor” b/w “Monster Crack” (Rooftop)

Along with Spoonie Gee, former Treacherous Three frontman Kool Moe Dee is still probably the smoothest one-man act from the old school. He tells stories. In this anti-female tale Moe Dee makes the ugly claim, “The poontang was dope/And you know that I rocked her/But three days later/Go see the doctor.” It really is a funny story, told with

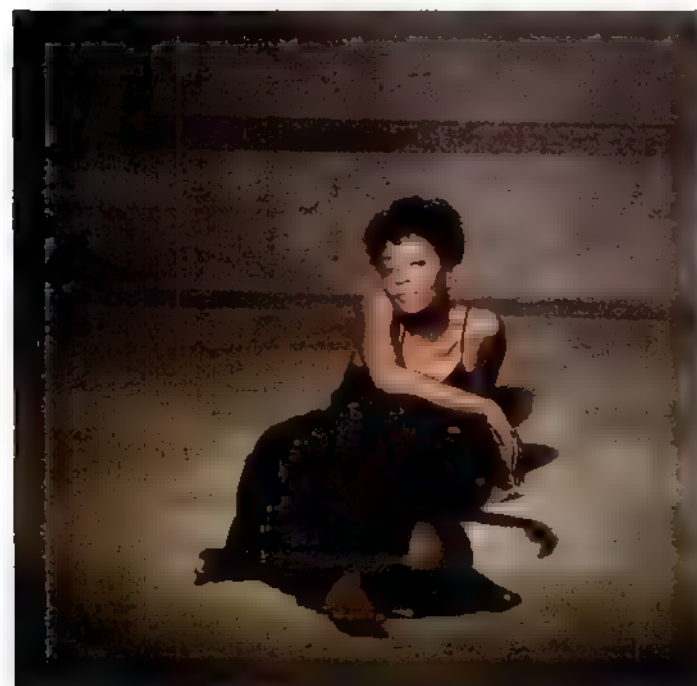
warmth and complete self-interest, but I’m getting tired of all this anti-sex talk. And even more tired of the anti-crack talk you’ll find on the B-side. In such regressive times, it’s hard to have a sense of humor about sexism.

Shop Assistants: “I Don’t Wanna Be Friends with You” b/w “Looking Back” & “All Day Long (Slow Version)” (Blue Guitar/Chrysalis import)

The tag on these Scots is that they’re teenyboppers, and they don’t do anything to shake it here. “I don’t want to be civilized,” says singer, Alex, “you

leave me and I’ll scratch your eyes out.” Easy to dismiss this as fluff; as propulsive as it is, it gets snagged on the group’s adolescent preciousness. Must they be Everyteen? But after a few listenings the fresh-faced postures become as palatable as any others, and the band continues to rock the shit out of the hooks. Make no mistake, this isn’t punk as we knew it; the Shop Assistants’ third-generation thrash is consciously reverent. But as the idle lover’s threats of the A-side adapt themselves time after time into a punk nursery rhyme, and “Looking Back” refuses to adhere at the joints, this becomes my favorite record of the month.

Opposite: B-Fats walks to his favorite wop spot; Left: Kool Moe Dee gets a clean bill of health; Below: Anita Baker collapses under all that weight.



Sideswipes

The **Beastie Boys’** “It’s the New Style” b/w “Paul Revere” (Def Jam/Columbia) once again works both as a hip hop record and a record about hip hop. “Lotta girls a lotta beer and a lotta cursin’/Twenty-two automatic on my person.” A spaghetti western. . . . The **Original Concept** begin and end the hilarious “Bite’n My Stylee” (Def Jam/Columbia) with the line, “Wait a minute . . . I’m not Jamaican,” but they spend the song pretending to be, even as they complain that other people are pretending to be them. Like T-Money grows this def beard, then goes to a party and finds that all the girls have def beards. . . . Hollis’s **Showboys** run down a violent gangster war in “Drag Rap” (Profile) before calling in Elliot Ness to restore law and order. All right, but too much yakety yak. . . . **Ice T** claims to be the only hard-core rapper in L.A., and on the explosive “Dog’n the Wax” b/w “In the Morning” (Techno-Hop) he throws down enough gun talk to support his

claim. Tough stuff. . . . The **Bang Orchestra!** spells out the Chicago house metamusic imperative on “Samples!” (Geffen), the first major label house release. . . . **Mixmaster Gee and the Turntable Orchestra** get just as self-referential in a hip hop jones on “The Manipulator” (MCA), which includes such banal details as Gee’s favorite anti-skate setting, all delivered with force. . . . **Divine Sounds** come from Brooklyn and they tell all about it on “Me and My Posse” (Danya): “We smoke a bag of buddah/Drink a bottle of wine.” And other, cuter stuff about hanging out at the mall. To the beat of “My Adidas.” . . . **Awesome Foursome** have a great name and a good beat on “Monster Beat” (Danya), a funky rap with a bassline but too many familiar samples. Why doesn’t somebody sample something fresh? . . . These last three singles appear on *Hip Hop Electro 14*, the latest cost-effective sampler from Street Sounds. If you can find imports but not rap 12-inches, ask your local importer to order as many volumes of this series as (s)he can get a hold of. Then buy ‘em.



DAMN IT, JANET

Janet Jackson declares her freedom on her aggressive breakthrough album. But a battle for power rages around this cool young woman's career.

Walk into the office of one of the hot managers in pop music at the moment, and you are struck: Joe Jackson's outer office is empty, except for his secretary and a young white couple necking in the corner. The walls are filled with publicity photos of his nine children, including a huge oil painting of Janet Jackson. Hot? Burning, baby . . . Jackson listens poker-faced to my apologies for being late and ushers me into his private office. "You have 15 minutes," he says.

On his office walls hang a few items of Michael Jackson memorabilia—the gold record for *Thriller*—next to several paintings of lions, Joe Jackson's astrological sign. The look is music business power, but the sound is calm, unusual calm in light of the excitement and activity surrounding Jackson. Janet's album, *Control*, has been at the top of the charts all year and is about to burst

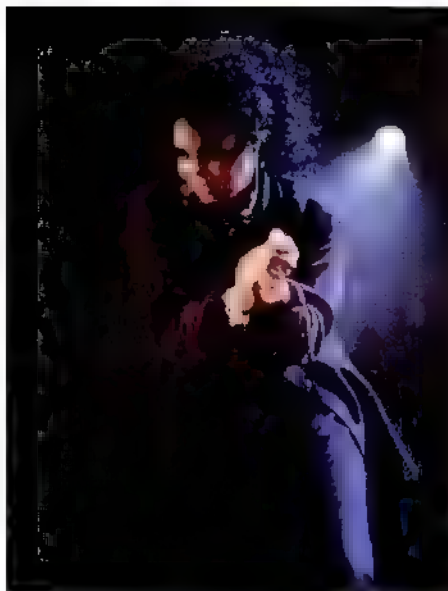
Article by J.C. Stevenson

Photography by Pete Tangen

One of the first defiantly adult things Janet did was to marry James DeBarge, of the group DeBarge, and then annul the marriage.

upward again with the just-released title track single. And in a few days she'll be in the Olympic Auditorium in downtown L.A. shooting the album's fourth video before a screaming throng of mostly black and Hispanic teenagers.

A secretary stirs outside, the phones hardly ring. Janet is in Japan doing a commercial, and Michael is in the studio with Quincy Jones finishing the long-awaited sequel to *Thriller*. But you cannot just start in with Joe Jackson, because he doesn't make you comfortable. He is a stern, if not altogether intimidating veteran of the black music circuit, where he broke his sons as the Jackson Five, and has been known to pursue a deal with the instincts of a



Courtesy of A&M/Orcid

shark and the wiles of a con man.

But sometimes he's landed in deep water. The complexity of managing a group as popular as the Jackson Five was overwhelming at times, and Michael's career became absolutely impossible. When his management contract with Michael ran out in 1983, Michael did not renew it. So for the past year, Jackson has devoted himself to the Joe Jackson Dancers, a troupe of hot young international lovelies, and Patti Brooks, an older Casablanca Records disco star. He has also lent his name to a line of brandy and is marketing a soft drink called Jo Cola. But this kind of hustling seems strange for Jackson. His main client is his daughter, and Janet Jackson's career has reached the top.

"We're the dog with the bone that all the other dogs are trying to get," barks Jackson. "And the pressure is always on you to hold onto what you've got."

What he's got is a showstopper. Just a few years

ago, Janet's act was cute and bubblegum. Kind of tinkly. Now, it's a well-rehearsed and choreographed potboiler, with Janet strutting and shaking her butt in the videos, while singing songs that are furiously sexual.

"She's of age," says Jackson. "But then, it's just an image. Janet isn't that way at home. She may think of herself as a little rebel, but she's still my daughter. She's always been just Janet Jackson to me."

In 1977 Norman Lear cast Janet as a wide-eyed, angelic-looking battered child on the sitcom *Good Times* after watching her on several Jackson Family television specials. She was a regular until two years later, when she moved on to *Diff'rent Strokes*, where she played the sassy-talking Charlene. There were faster moves to make. By the time she was 16, her father was shopping for a recording deal at A&M, although she had doubts about her readiness to enter the recording business. But Joe Jackson

kept pushing. "I feel it," he told her. "You're ready. I can tell."

Jackson tries to take hold of my notes to read what I intend to ask him, but I tactfully manage to short-circuit his attempt. He is a proud, plainspoken man, who doesn't hesitate to claim his role in Janet's success. The last year has been an extended battle for control of Janet: the wily, tough, shrewd Joe Jackson is aligned against the smooth, young-market-oriented A&M Records executive John McClain, who is given a great share of the credit for Janet's breakthrough. Each of these forces is out to depose the other. At times during the making of *Control*, the struggle generated such bitterness that the two were barely speaking. According to McClain, Jackson didn't want Janet to record with the powerhouse writing/producing team of Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, never heard the album until it was completed, didn't like the finished product when he first heard it, and didn't think it would sell.

"I'm not the type to jump into the media, but people know I'm the backbone of the Jackson family," says Jackson. "As for Janet, I was putting her on stages in Vegas back when she was still a little girl."

Jackson doesn't look at me too often as he paces the floor. He is more intent on his own thoughts than my reactions.

"I've worked hard for my family," he asserts. "The problem comes, though, when others come in behind you and try to steal them away. Others tell them: 'We can do this for you, we can do that.' But the wheels had already been set in motion for Janet Jackson; anyone who jumps on now will be getting a free ride. And I don't intend to let that happen."

By "anyone who jumps on now," Jackson may be referring to the 31-year-old McClain. More than a record company executive, McClain has been a close family friend of the Jacksons since 1968, when he attended the Walton Academy in Encino with several of the Jackson brothers.

"When I was two," Janet said, "John used to change my diapers. He's like a son to my parents. I can talk to him for four and five hours straight on the phone and never get bored. He's always been there for me."

The mention of McClain's name wins a less than enthralled reaction from Joe Jackson.

"I take nothing away from John McClain," he says.

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evenly. "But he works for a record company and he gets paid to do what he's done for Janet Jackson. He has no control over her. He's not in business to have control over her. And no, he is not like a son to me. John McClain has his own daddy."

Jackson continues to pace, pausing by the window every so often to gaze at the impressive view of Los Angeles below.

"I have no favorites, be it Michael, Janet, or whomever," he reflects. "You have children that are more talented than others, but they're all yours. Even the ones with no talent. Katherine and I tried to develop the talent of all our children. They were trained hard and taught well. As parents, we wanted them to get all they deserved, and deserve all they got." Janet's *Control* album, says Jackson, is successful because it reflects her background. "She came out of a black situation. Those are her roots. You can stay black and still sell millions of records."

And bottom-line, according to Jackson, is that the family "is making money. If Janet listens to me and works a little harder, she'll be as big as Michael."

It's starting to get dark. The lights of Los Angeles are glittering and Joe Jackson has been answering questions for close to an hour. "When you're in the public eye," he observes quietly, "your life is in the public domain. People read about you, they

write about you. They draw their own conclusions. I would get more respect if the public knew the whole story, if they really looked at where the Jackson clan started and where it is today."

Jackson smiles and looks at me directly. "Others try to jump on the bandwagon," he says. "I am the bandwagon."

Janet drives up to the photo studio in her shiny black Mercedes-Benz 300 with her dog, Fluffy, and her production assistant, Jessica, and bounces in all bright and bubbly like a chubby-cheeked Michael.

"Like a bat out of hell," says her publicist, who's been waiting at the studio for them to arrive.

It's a murky, overcast day and we're in photographer Pete Tangen's studio, a spiffy setup located between downtown L.A. and Koreatown in the kind of shabby neighborhood that makes you want to check your car periodically. But Janet seems unperturbed. She's cool and very self-possessed. And just barely turned 20. She's cuddly pretty, not the womanly beauty of the videos. ("I'd like to be as beautiful as Rebbie and LaToya," she says. "They can walk out of the house wearing no makeup and look good. Me, I had a photographer tell me he wanted to shoot me with a 'natural' look. Just a little

base, lipstick, and mascara. I looked at myself in the mirror and thought: 'Gawd, is that it?' I mean, I'm not the last of the litter. I'm not ugly. I'm not gorgeous. I'm on the borderline. I just made it over . . . barely.")

Janet's hair is tied up in ultrablack ringlets, and she is wearing red nail polish, ultrawhite socks, and sturdy lace-up shoes. Here, in the studio, she is trying to present a portrait of the private Janet Jackson, who worries about wearing contact lenses like Whoopi Goldberg and Grace Jones. ("I look at them and go: 'Whoooooooooooooo. . . .'")

Archie Bell and the Drells' "Tighten Up" and Booker T and the MGs' "Green Onions" blast from the tape deck. If Janet's worried about anything, it doesn't show.

"Don't you know any of these songs?" Pete Tangen asks, firing off shots.

"You talkin' to me?" she asks. "Nah."

Janet gives off the kind of keep-your-distance signals that can chill any attempts at overfamiliarity. Tangen's assistants have laid out a nice spread of food: Chinese chicken salad, Kentucky Fried Chicken, the obligatory cheese and crackers, fruit, and Evian water. But while everyone else stuffs his face over the course of the three-hour shoot, Janet doesn't eat much. Just an apple, an occasional grape.

She's one cool girl, this Janet Jackson.

But, then, she can afford to be. When Janet was just a baby, still living in a close-knit, protected family environment, her five older brothers—Michael, Jermaine, Jackie, Marlon, and Tito—formed one of the premier black pop groups in the country, the Jackson Five. Managed by their father, who was formerly a guitarist with a '50s soul group called the Falcons, the Jackson Five had the distinction of being able to come up with a hit record for Motown Records practically every three months: "I Want You Back," "ABC," "The Love You Save," "I'll Be There."

In March 1976, the group decided to leave Motown, citing a desire for more "creative control" as one of their reasons. It generated a slow-to-heal rift between Joe Jackson and Jermaine, who was married to Motown mogul Berry Gordy's daughter, Hazel. Jermaine elected to remain at the label. "It's my blood that flows through his body," Joe Jackson said, "not Gordy's." Jackson does not manage his oldest child, Rebbie Jackson, who scored a Top 20 pop urban hit in 1984 with the single "Centipede," which was produced by Michael. He does, however, oversee the careers of the Jacksons (with brother Randy). Janet, and his other daughter, 30-year-old LaToya, who sang on the "We Are the World" sessions and had a minor black radio hit single a few years back with "Heart Don't Lie."

While all of his children have pursued stardom with varying degrees of luck, it is the hugely successful Michael and the on-the-rise Janet who have emerged as the true stars of the family. Michael, for all his soft-spoken, gentle demeanor, is said to be fiercely competitive, acutely business-minded. It's rumored that part of the reason his follow-up to *Thriller* has been delayed is so it won't have to share the charts with Janet's *Control*.

But the album shows no sign of expiring. *Control* was one of the ten best-selling albums of 1986. Three million people bought it. Ferociously hip and intensely autobiographical, its dance tracks made it one of the most exciting releases by a black artist since—dare I say it?—Michael's *Thriller*. And despite all the prostrations on the altar of crossover by many artists of color these days, *Control*'s distinction is that it is so aggressively black. Funky, focused, and rhythmic, *Control* contained an extraordinary number of hit singles. It is clearly an expression of a woman defining her soul and declaring her freedom. At its center is the title song "Control," which can be taken as Janet's comment on the crisis that has forced her to divide her loyalties

"I'm not trying to pimp Janet or steal her away from her father," says John McClain, "but I have a clearer vibe on how to make her the queen of the music industry."

between McClain and her father. "When I was 17 . . . I did what my father said . . . but that was long ago."

Seated across from me in an office at Tangen's studio, Janet spells out its special significance. "When I listen to it, I hear someone who is very cocky, bold, straightforward, assertive."

"A pimp?" John McClain asks incredulously. "I'm not trying to pimp Janet Jackson or steal her away from her father. I dig Janet Jackson." McClain says that he has, perhaps, gotten "too much credit" for the acclaim Janet is currently receiving, but he did match her with Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis. *Control*, he emphasizes, is the result of hard work put in "by the A-Team: myself, Janet, Jimmy, and Terry."

"I would have been scared if Joe Jackson had liked what we did, because I wasn't trying to get a 50-year-old audience. I'm trying to get these kids out here. And because I'm a lot younger than Joe Jackson, I have a clearer vibe on how to do that."

McClain is a smart and savvy young man who manages to convey confidence without seeming arrogant. He says he's enthusiastic about the reunion of the Time that will take place next year when the Morris Day-led group stars with Janet in a movie for which McClain has written the screenplay.

"I saw Prince's *Under the Cherry Moon* and thought it was too esoteric," he says diplomatically. "Our movie will be more down-to-earth . . . and ethnic." He calls the tour Janet and the Time will embark on next summer "historic: I expect it to be the concert of the year."

Janet's fans, he says, have only gotten a small taste of what she has to offer as a performing artist. "I've told her: 'Let Whitney [Houston] and Patti [LaBelle] sing their lungs out. Just concentrate on being a female Michael Jackson and you'll give the people something that's even more exciting.' After all, Luther Vandross is a better singer, but Michael's a bigger star because of the way he dances, because of his visual concepts."

McClain says it took him a long time to get Janet to break down and admit that she wanted to be as big a star as her brother. "When I talk to Janet," he allows, "I'm her father, her brother, her shrink. She trusts me. She felt guilty about admitting that she did feel competitive. She was scared that she'd try and fail. Well, Michael may not want her to be as big, but it's no sin for her to want it."

McClain was from a well-to-do family himself. He and Michael were close friends when they attended Walton Academy. "Tito and Jermaine never wanted to hang out with Michael, so I did," he says. Until recently, he notes, Joe Jackson had always made him feel like a member of the Jackson clan. While her father did get Janet her contract with A&M Records, McClain says, "Joe left Janet in my hands because he had a lot of other projects going. He gave me enough rope to hang myself." Instead, McClain proceeded to make Janet one of his special projects. He got her to diet and exercise, sent her to a vocal coach, and teamed her with choreographer Paula Abdul. He even picked out her clothes at Maxfield in West Hollywood and sent her to his hair stylist for a new look.

Initially, Janet earned only a modest level of achievement at the label. Her 1982 debut album,

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which contained the mini-hit "Young Love," and her Giorgio Moroder-produced 1984 *Dream Street* album, both sold a respectable 200,000 units (*Control*, however, sold 250,000 copies in one week in July). After McClain had been at A&M for only six months, he received a highly lucrative offer to join MCA Records' black music division. "But I stayed at A&M because of Janet. And I didn't stay to see her sell just 200,000 units." Friction with Joe Jackson developed as *Control* became a blockbuster. "When an album sells 200,000 units it's a 'me' project; when it sells 3 million, it becomes a 'we' project."

Lately, McClain has acquired a mystique in the music industry as the Svengali who exerts total authority over Janet Jackson, even to the point of having coerced her into getting her divorce. McClain explains it differently: "People look at Janet as being weak, but she's tough. Yes, I did pry into her business a bit. I didn't think the marriage was a good move for her. Even her brothers weren't crazy about it. But nobody slammed me for having too much influence over Janet until she started selling a lot of records. She and I were close even back when she wasn't selling any."

McClain says his aim is to make her the "queen of the music industry. It's been a challenge just to bring her to this level; people told me I'd never be able to do it. But Janet has so much potential. She's got cards she hasn't even shown yet."

Clad in a funky black tuxedo jacket and tight black pants, Janet relentlessly chews on a wad of gum and chooses her words carefully. "To be honest, I didn't know all of that was in me." While Michael did contribute a bit of production aid to her modestly successful 1984 LP *Dream Street*, he had no input on *Control*. Janet spent two months in Minneapolis working on it with Jam and Lewis, and Michael didn't hear any of the tracks until the LP was completed. "I wanted this album to be my success, not my family's," she said. "And Jimmy and Terry helped me get it."

Jam and Lewis, former members of the Time, know what works. Onstage, the Time came storming at you in funky pimp suits, arrogant motherfuckers, grabbing their crotches and preening like peacocks with their jeri-curl'd do's. The Time spit sex at you.

"I saw the Time in concert back when I was 16. It was in Chicago, and they were great. And soooooo nasty. I was sitting out in the audience next to my Mom, and I got so embarrassed that I had to move a few seats away from her."

Before they began working with Janet, the stylishly lewd duo had submitted the tracks of *Control* to Sharon Bryant, the former lead singer of the R&B pop group Atlantic Starr, who, fortunately for Janet, decided she didn't want that rambunctious a sound on her solo recording. Talk about bad career moves.

"Sharon just wanted a different feeling, I guess, so Jimmy and Terry saved the tracks," says Janet. "What you hear on the album is the result of a lot of jamming that they did right there in the studio. All the music is pretty much them. But the lyrics, the vocal arrangements, the keyboards and synthesizers, that's where I came in."

Most of *Control*'s power is in its dance floor authority, from the initial hits, "What Have You Done for Me Lately" and "Nasty," to the more sweetly sublime "When I Think of You" (the single that made Janet and her brother Michael the first siblings to earn solo No. 1 pop hits). Her record company, A&M, fully expects it to reach the 5 or 6 million mark—which would put her squarely in Whitney Houston territory.

While Janet's pride in what she achieved on the album is obvious, her voice contains few enthusiastic inflections, and her direct gaze remains hard to read. It's no accident that *Control* is the name of her album, since that's how Janet seems to want to



Janet's act was cute and bubblegum. Now, it's a potboiler, with Janet strutting and shaking her butt and singing songs that are furiously sexual.

appear: worldly, tightly in control, capable of resisting all manipulation.

"A lot of people look at my smile and think of me as innocent and shy," admits Janet. "Now, people are finally starting to look at me as an adult." Janet cracks her knuckles. With her foot resting casually on the footrest of my chair, she has a smug little "ask me anything, I dare you" smile on her face. One of the first defiantly adult things Janet ever did was to wed dreamy-eyed, ponytailed James DeBarge, a member of the singing group DeBarge. Her brother Jermaine had discovered DeBarge back when the Grand Rapids, Michigan, quintet was recording for a small gospel label and brought them to Motown. For a while DeBarge seemed destined to become the label's answer to the departed Jackson Five. While they didn't live up to that promise, DeBarge did build a solid reputation on the strength of its creamy, falsetto-based R&B sound.

"I met James when I was 10 and he was 13," Janet says softly. "We'd talk on the phone all the time. He had this sweet, affectionate personality and we became best friends. Later we became more than friends." Janet languidly chews her gum as she explains, "I always had more male friends than female friends. I just got along better with guys. But when James and I started going together, I gave up all my male friends."

James had, which everyone does, certain problems. That's what made me grow closer to him. I wanted to help him." The young couple got married at a ceremony that none of her family attended. "I came home the next day to tell my parents what I'd done. Before I could even get to the door or put my bags down, my father met me with the news." Seven months later, she announced that she had decided to have the marriage annulled. A cast member of the TV show *Fame* at the time of her wedding, Janet blames an intense work

schedule for her decision to end the marriage.

"When I'd finally get home at night, I'd be so tired. James would want to work with me on song ideas—we used to write together—and I just wouldn't feel like it." Janet realizes that most people would consider it a bit unseemly ("selfish, really," she admits) to divorce someone simply because you didn't have enough time to spend with them. "But I was never with James the way I wanted to be with him. And I just wasn't happy living that way." Her plaintive tone of voice is the first break in the armor of cool she's worn all afternoon.

James reportedly has said he's "confused about the whole situation," and may not think she gave their marriage enough of a chance.

"He might not think so, but I know I did. And it really hurt to get the annulment. I was in shock when I did it. I cried, he cried. But we've tried to stay friends. We go to the movies, and that feels weird: sitting there next to somebody you used to be married to." She mentions they're both dating other people, and to her that's a healthy sign.

"He'll get over it," Janet says, picking at one of her short fingernails. "I mean, he must be getting over it if he's dating."

Little seems to concern Janet as much as how people regard her decision to divorce James DeBarge. While not defensive, she does project an intense need to set the record straight about her feelings toward him. And while she doesn't mention it, it does look like the person Janet became when she emerged from her marriage is the sexy, self-assured Janet Jackson the world sees today. Though they have long since ceased being a couple, rumors and innuendos about their relationship persist. Not just among her fans and the media, but among her show business peers as well.

"I ran into Vanity recently, and she said: 'Hey, I heard you had James's baby.' I told her that was old news. Then there are the stories that I was pregnant when we got married but had an abortion. A few months ago this guy stopped me on the street to say he heard I'd really had my baby over in Europe and was paying somebody to raise it for me." A mild expression of disgust passes over her face. "Gawd, so stupid. Someday I ought to write a book about the whole thing. . . ."

Like her brother, Janet is plagued by rumors. And while others may not understand his penchant for plastic surgery and snoozing in a hyperbaric chamber, Janet, at least, has the inside scoop on what motivates him. "Michael says that out of any two people in our family, we're the ones who think the most alike. I probably understand him better than anyone else does. Certain things he does, others may wonder why . . . but I know why. Of course," she says, in cool command once again, "that doesn't mean I'll tell why."

"You can cry and mope about what people say about you. Or you can channel that energy into your art. Really, it just makes you stronger."

Rebbie Jackson delicately nibbles at just the center of her quiche and takes only one or two ladylike sips of champagne. "I want to keep a clear head," she jokes. "I don't want to say too much."

Rebbie was 13 when Janet was born. Soon after, their mother, Katherine, decided to go to night school to earn her high school diploma. "She had polio when she was young," explains Rebbie. "And she quit school when she was a teenager." By day, Katherine Jackson worked at a Sears department store (back in the Jackson Five's pre-Motown, Indiana days). "I took care of Janet when she was a baby," Rebbie smiles. "So I think of her as mine. Other people are surprised at what she's accomplished, but I could have predicted it. What with her divorce, this level of success has been a shot in the arm for Janet."

Whereas Katherine, Rebbie, and Michael are Jehovah's Witnesses, Janet is not, although she says, "I do study once in a while with Rebbie. Sometimes I'll pick up a book of Bible stories. To get a point across to someone, I may refer to something I've read. But I'm not a religious person. My mother doesn't try to force me into it. She wants something like that to be my decision."

While Katherine Jackson has had little luck in influencing Janet's theological leanings, she did manage to talk her into moving back home after her divorce. "I wanted to get a smaller place of my own. Maybe a condo," she admits. "But my mother would call me and say: 'If you're lonely, your room will always be here.' Finally, I just said OK, because I could tell she missed having me around."

Without warning, Janet grabs my notepad from my lap to see what I've been writing about her.

"Gawd, what is this . . . shorthand? And you can write on each line. I'd have to skip lines to write like this."

"That's because you don't do it for a living," I say, a tad huffily, and Janet giggles.

*I don't want to rule the world
just want to run my life
So make your life a little easier
When you get the chance. . .*

—"Control"

"Mmmm, I'm starting to get tired," Janet sighs. She smiles, her expression sly. "You know, I can't sleep alone. At night I have to sleep with somebody or something. . ."

"Yeah, I know. I've read that about you."

"This is what I sleep with." Her toe gently nudges Fluffy, the napping pooch on the floor between us that she had rescued from Balboa Park in Encino.



John McClain of A&M Records has acquired a mystique in the music industry as the Svengali who controls Janet Jackson, who even coerced her into getting a divorce.

"Some people just dumped her out the back of a van and drove off." As for companions of the two-legged variety, Janet is much more selective. "I don't have many friends. I've been hurt a lot in the past. People use me to get close to my brothers and sisters, and that hurts like crazy."

What Janet wants now and is determined to get is control of her own life. There is a special person in her life ("His name is Rene") and she calls him very supportive. "When I got the annulment from James, Rene was one of the first people I called. I told him, 'I don't believe what I've just done.' But really, having a boyfriend and a career would be too hard right now. I have to watch myself and make sure I don't get too wrapped up." She gives a little laugh. "That would be serious trouble." That wistful little ballad from *Control* called "Let's Wait Awhile" perhaps summarizes Janet's attitude about relationships these days. "Being married feels different from just living with someone. James and I both wanted our careers, so the marriage would've ended sooner or later. But look what came out of it. I hear he's back in the studio, working on some new stuff. And I have my album, which did well for me."

Janet seems amazingly unfrazzled by all the forces competing to control her actions and her destiny. Others may be bent on making her *The Next Big Thing* in the industry, but Janet, at least today, looks blissfully undriven.

"James used to call me lazy," she laughs. "I think he was right."

She smiles, gives a small sigh, and I feel like telling her that maintaining control over one's own life is no small feat; it is, in fact, one of the toughest things that a person, let alone a long-buffered and protected 20-year-old, can do.



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UNDER THE VOLCANOS



Volcano Suns are the most ass-kicking trio in America. Oh, those nasty boys.

Article by Byron Coley

Photography by Paul Robicheau

It was sorta like a dream. I was walking down a street in Boston. A gaggle of young girls was gathered about a half block up the street. As I got closer I could hear them laughing and see them jostling each other, vying to get peeks of something through a large window. As I drew near their voices became distinct.

Girl One: No! It looks like a hot loaf of bread.

Girl Two: Nuh-uh! A shoebox!

Inside the window there was a long counter. Behind the counter, copying machines of all varieties were throbbing, but they were invisible to the young eyes around me. All they saw was the young man who worked there, his elbows resting on the countertop. His shirt was of a vaguely Samoan motif in a variety of dull browns, and perched above it was a haircut that did kinda look like a shoebox. Underneath this bizarre coiffure lolled one of the finest hoots of a drummer that this city has produced in a long time. His name is Peter Prescott. His band is the Volcano Suns.

The Suns recently released their second album, *All Night Lotus Party* (Homestead), and it's more fun than nudist badminton (my idea of near-heaven). It is also possessed of enough inertial drive to make the Suns the most ass-kicking trio in America. If this means I'm calling 'em better than ZZ Top (too old), Hüsker Dü (too fey), Firehose (too young), the Meat Puppets (too unfocused), and Angst (too serious), so be it.

Who's your barber?

Prescott: Nick at Nick's Barbershop in Allston.

Do you have a name for that?

Prescott: For what?

That haircut. Is it your own invention, or is it something Nick came up with?

Prescott: Plenty of people have hair like this.

Oh yeah? Where?

Prescott: Uh, New Bedford.

The Volcano Suns were actually formed some 50 miles north of New Bedford, in the Greater Boston area, in the spring of 1984. At that time, Prescott heisted a couple of members from a nascent combo called Disneyland after auditioning for that band's drum position. It had been a couple of years since his last band, Mission of Burma, had ceased to exist, and Prescott had a yen to get a new thing goin'. Something that would be as aggressive as the very aggressive Burma, but also with "a sort of goofy edge." Pete's other desire was to "drop melodies smack-dab in the middle of chaos." The Suns seem to have achieved these stated goals and then some.

The original trio lasted only a few months, but the current lineup (with Jon Williams on guitar and Jeff Weigard on bass) has been together since the fall of '84. In that time they've gone from being a sneakily anarchic, post-riff throb-monster to a band that rocks in a thoroughly boss and unpredictable way. With his face bulging like a squeeze toy beneath his bread-loaf do, Pete tosses out unlikely combinations of rolls and thumps, bellowing like a raging news vendor all the while. In the past few months, Jeff and Jon seem to have gotten some jumping beans stuck in their britches as well, moving through all manner of goofus tongue-in-cheek rock-poses. This sorta completes their visual package, as it were.



Prescott's drumming has a tendency to be wiggly, so Jeff's bass has always been the solidly there pulse-maker on which the band cavorts. Jon's noise-sheet guitar playing comes at you with a kind of solidity that has nothing to do with Joe Perry. This alone would distinguish him from his Boston brethren, but he also conjures up riff stuff that adds beef-density to Prescott's highly melodic tubsterism. Toss in whooping lead vocals by Pete and additional mouth-highlights by the Twin Bulldogs of Love (Jon and Jeff's official *nom de band*), and you've got a sound that is crudely holistic and unmistakable.

Are there any other copy professionals in the band? Prescott: I don't think Jeff or Jon has ever laid a finger on a Xerox machine.

That must make it tough to communicate sometimes. Prescott: They have a different perspective, yeah. I have toner in my blood, so to speak.

Do the sounds of printing machines ever suggest songs to you?

Prescott: No. Well, maybe subliminally they suggest messages. I don't know, but most of the songs on the first record were just written about hating the scene in Boston.

The Suns recorded their first album, *The Bright Orange Years*, in the fall of '84 as a demo for Homestead. They played quite a bit around Boston, but found surprisingly little support. A hard-core coterie of smarties has been entranced by the band's oddball thud-mojo from the first, but most of the asshole college kids who make up Boston's after-dark population have been under the thrall of the various roots-dork bands that sprang up in the wake of the Del Fuegos. Furthermore, Boston's pen-jockeys

seem unable to categorize the band as anything other than "that ex-Mission of Burma dude and a couple of jimokes." Add to this the Suns' apparent inability to ass-kiss, and it becomes obvious that the Suns will have to make it on sheer talent.

Surely there is no better way to judge a band (and its talent) than by the covers it chooses to do. Two of the tunes they've selected are particularly emblematic of their brain-fever. The first is "Bilbo Baggins"—an odious bit of post-hippie fluff first recorded by Leonard Nimoy on one of his thoroughly noxious Dot LPs; the second is "Drink, Fight and Fuck"—an obscure piece of pud-flex by New Hampshire's insane biker/moaner, G.G. Allin. And if the mere selection of these tunes wasn't enough, the Suns also do justice to both of 'em. When they shared a bill with G.G. in Chicago, they were too "shy" to play "DF&F." But they do the tune even better than the Scumfucs (G.G.'s band), and that's my solemn vow. Interestingly, "DF&F" seems to be one of the songs that's finally getting the Suns across to the dull-witted peasants of Boston.

The Suns are at least as goofy as Prescott hoped they'd be. When picking a title for the second album, they went through hundreds. One day it would be *Volcano Suns Smoke Pot*. Next day it was *Nature In the Raw*, or *Born Alive*, or *Shining The Purple Helmet* (a New Bedford slang term for jerking off). Still, *All Night Lotus Party* ended up with the name it has now, and it's the sort of record you can play for people who like good stuff.

More stretched out than *The Bright Orange Years*, *Lotus Party* bends and twists around in all sorts of loopy ways that suggest the Suns are power-slinking toward all kinds of new stylistic turf. Prescott even suggests they're interested in doing "soundtrack-

"Jeff and Jon have never laid a finger on a Xerox machine. I have toner in my blood, so to speak."

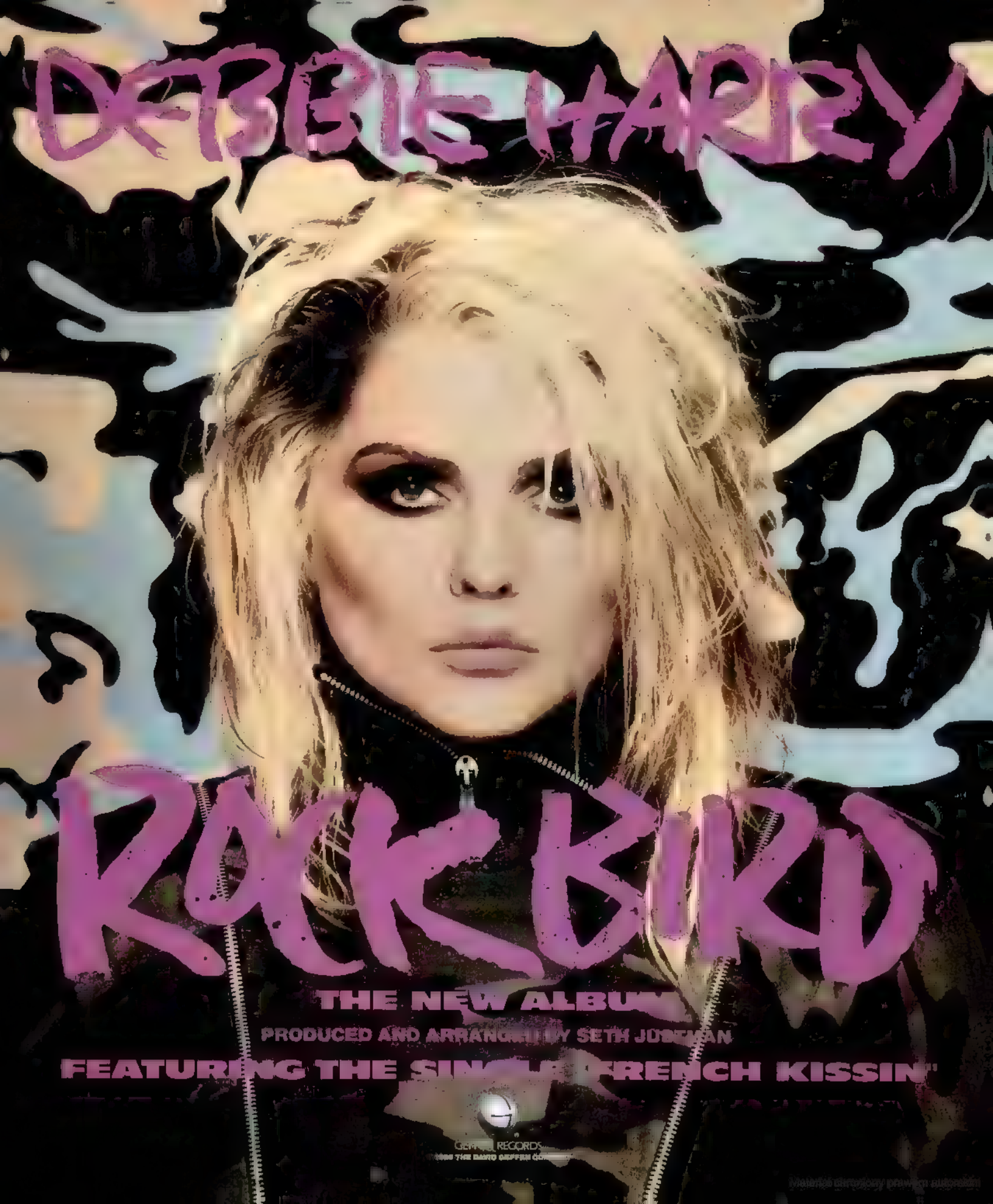
type work." In fact, the Suns don't seem to dismiss outright any kind of work.

Any truth to the rumor that you and Thurston Moore (another copyshop professional when Sonic Youth's not touring) are writing a collaborative rock opera about copy shops?

Prescott: No, although we talked about doing a single with Sonic Youth—they on one side and us on the other—where each band would be doing a cover selected by the other one. We picked "American Pie" for them, but the project never really got going. The opera's not a bad idea though. I'll have to get in touch with them. At one point Jeff and Jon were very serious about wanting to do a rock opera about Evel Knievel. Those guys, especially Jon, have a very unhealthy obsession with Evel Knievel . . . him, Tom Jones, Mr. T., Mark Spitz. . . .

I look up from my cheeseburger to see if Prescott's smirking, but he's got a serious, reflective look on his face. I stare at him inquiringly, but he doesn't crack a smile. That guy. What a joker. I guess with a haircut like his, you'd have to be.

The Volcano Suns (L-R) Peter Prescott, Jeff Weigand, and Jon Williams, practice the Lotus position.



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STILL MBAQANGA AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

For 20 years, Paul Simon whined and kvetched about the same things. Then he went to Africa and finally had fun. But he broke the UN cultural boycott in the process. He has a lot of explaining to do.

There is this guy, call him Goatman, because that's what he sounds like. Here is what he sounds like on a tune called "Emthonjeni Womculo": ow oww oowwww. He is Howlin' Wolf as pedagogue, a patient, preacherly voice moaning out a Zulu rap about the universality of music, how it has no beginning or end. Like that.

There is this other guy, Paul Simon. He doesn't sound anything like a goatman; he doesn't sound bluesy, not tutorial, not low. When Simon brought some of Goatman's confederates to New York from Soweto last year to record the new *Graceland* album, upon arrival one of them asked where he had to go to register with the police. Simon had a lot of explaining to do. *Graceland* is for the most part a record of South African rhythm tracks, bouncing underneath the kind of stuff you've heard Simon talk about before. And in exactly that Simon voice: somebody I asked for pre-interview advice just said, "Ask, 'why did you sing on the album?'" This is not, however, why Simon has been doing a lot of explaining since *Graceland* came out.

I always hated Paul Simon. He put enough cheek into the pooped-out urban despair of the '70s to give a lot of people the excuse they were looking for to feel good about feeling bad. Self-absorbed, seemingly comfy in his ennui instead of trying to blowtorch it out of his heart—God, what a target. Shit like "My Little Town" and "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover" and "Slip Slidin' Away" was real shit, a good inside joke at the pagan worship of singer-songwriter geniuses. And there's that milk-shake voice. Where's the backbone?

Are you a Mets fan or a Yankee fan?

I'm both. I grew up being a Yankee fan, but I root for the Mets in the National League.

Oh yeah, sure!

Here's why Simon is explaining *Graceland* so much these days. In South Africa, it is easy to find the "township jive" that he loves and

puts forth on *Graceland*; it's on the radio far more frequently in many areas than, say, Michael Jackson or Run-D.M.C. The apartheid regime finds it useful to promote this raucous music, with its cheerful descriptions and parables of township life, which supports the government's idea of what simple, folksy people the "homeland" dwellers are. American black rock and pop, which might suggest an international black heritage and unity, are restricted by the govern-

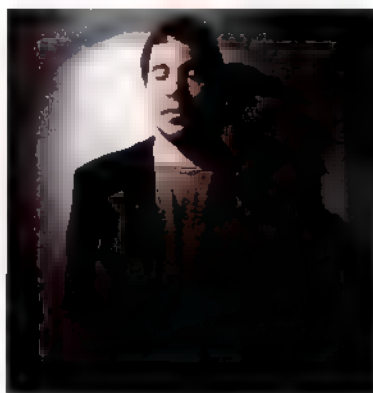
ment-controlled South African Broadcasting Corporation. The day "Dancing on the Ceiling" is blasting through the South African streets may only be the day they'll be dancing in the streets, on the ceiling, on the bones of the regime.

Apartheid aggressively monitors pop music. While certain cuts from Simon's album get played freely in South Africa, other interracial efforts aren't always permitted. (Big exception: "Ebony and Ivory," which went No. 1!) Two members of the South African reggae band Scratz were sentenced to four years behind bars in 1983 for "indirectly further[ing] the aims of the African National Congress." From the stage they had called for the release of Nelson Mandela. It is illegal, of course, to play the Special A.K.A.'s "Free Nelson Mandela."

There are some important objections to weigh in thinking about the pleasures of jive.

Besides wearing, at least for the moment, the regime's seal of approval, it doesn't much benefit the black musicians who make it. Sales abroad finance the white-controlled music industry; royalties to blacks are rare. Sipho Hotstix Mabuse, one of the musicians thanked on *Graceland*, had his equipment destroyed by anti-apartheid activists last year for collaborating with the music industry at a "People's Concert."

But then, there are the gifts of Goatman to weigh, too. And more important, some form of unity has been forged by this thumping, clattery pop music. It's shaping an audience, even generating a tiny, dogged black music industry. These bonds may not always be to the regime's tastes.



Article By RJ Smith

Jive is the root; its rockiest spin-off is *mbaqanga*. The sound started after World War II, when Zulus and Sothos working in industrialized townships merged folk forms with shit like old Lionel Hampton, Ray Charles, and Louis Jordan records. They played pennywhistles. They dug accordions. The traditional music broadened, splinters of R&B and jazz working into the beast until they were utterly absorbed. But they were way mutated too. So what you end up with is some of the strangest dance music around today, stuff in no way drumgroove-metameta like juju, not rife with James Brownian motion like highlife. Naw, when Simon says this music reminds him of '50s rock 'n' roll, I take it to mean he's thinking of *mbaqanga*'s keen aesthetic of the three-minute composition, its unself-conscious and exuberant voices, its immediacy. There is, further, its astonishing rawness: "What the Nominalists call the grit in the machine, I call the fundamental element of the machine," said philosopher T.E. Hulme, and doubtless South African groups like the New Lucky Boys, Nelcy Sedibe, Mister King Jerro, Moses Mchunu, and friends would agree. Jive sounds anything but developed, like it was invented minutes ago: music with a future.

"Roll back the carpet, put on the record, and jive baby jive," sayeth the liner notes to *Phenzulu Eghudeni* (Carthage), which like Soweto (Rough Trade) and *The Indestructible Beat of Soweto* (Shanachie) is a good place to start digging this floor-dusting. This music will last, for sure, even though the musicians won't see any money, and even though the government enforces its Sunday Observance Law (no work on Sunday), which along with work-week jobs ensures that recordings are done after hours or illegally. It will continue until the carpet is pulled up.

Paul Simon's airplane-hangar-sized office in the Brill Building in Manhattan is filled with memorabilia: a giant photo of Johnny Ace blown up from a promo pic Simon sent away for as a kid; guitars; artifacts dating back to his Tom and Jerry days. He'd insisted on seeing stuff I'd written before he'd jaw, but from his handshake on, I'm disappointed to find myself in the middle of a swimmingly enjoyable afternoon conversation. Simon sinks into a soft chair—and those diminutive guys can really sink—stares off, and gives all of my questions calm, considerable thought. What I first take for nervous pauses in the conversation are, in fact, meaningful lacunae. For a guy who's more New York than Yoo Hoo, he is one unrushed singer-songwriter. He listens attentively and truly likes to talk—after the interview he gestures for me to stay and chat about SPIN, Mario Cuomo, making another movie, and the California Angels. He doesn't try to dick me with his star power; he's smart, friendly, pleasant. Which only goes to show that it's not a good idea to talk to too many people—because then you can't hate them so much.

You've said that jive reminds you of '50s rock 'n' roll.

Yeah, a little bit. That's the best explanation I can come up with for some intuitive and emotional feeling. It does sound like that, and I do like that music and am able to relate to it, but there's some other inexplicable thing in it, too. So I just want to leave it as "quasi-'50s rock 'n' roll." There's something else in there, but I don't know what it is. Tell me about some '50s rock 'n' roll that's influenced you. Sam Cooke?

A big influence. First, I think Sam Cooke was the best voice. I don't think anybody was in Sam Cooke's league. And he also tended to be more of a soft singer and phraser, so there was more for me to learn because that's what my voice is naturally. Although he could belt too, essentially for me it was the smoothness of his voice. I was a big Sam Cooke

fan, still am, even more for his work with the Soul Stirrers than for his pop stuff.

What about Elvis?

Yeah, Elvis was there. He was the most important force in rock 'n' roll, no question about it. Nobody even close. It was his invention, he blended black and white music, and that's the single most powerful idea that's emerged from rock 'n' roll. Plus he had the voice, a great instrument.

Other stuff? The Everly Brothers, too—wouldn't have been a Simon and Garfunkel without the Everly Brothers. Doo wop groups, we sang in doo wop groups when we were kids. We learned about singing all the three different parts, from bass to falsetto. I still do that on all my records, still put in all the background vocals myself.



Jeffrey Moyer/Rainbow Photography

"I don't think the boycott was intended to block black South Africans from the international music community."

Tell me about the song "Graceland," which has a metaphor of a car trip through the South to Elvis's home. It sounds like the trip is a real report. What was it like to go to Graceland?

Just as in the song, the journey was more interesting than the destination. The drive up the Mississippi Delta is very beautiful. I had been recording for this album with Rockin' Dopsie in Louisiana. I rented a car and drove up. It was very beautiful—Louisiana, the rural South—and I hadn't been there in a long time.

But Graceland itself was just a business. Big parking lots, you buy your ticket, get on a bus, and wait in line. There's a tour, guides, and they take you through the house and show you Elvis's this and Elvis's that. It's a very common experience, but nevertheless, at the end, you come out onto the grounds and there are the graves of his mother, his father, and him. Even though it's so commercial, you could even feel it offensive to your taste—and then, on the plaque on Presley's grave, it says he was given the gift of this incredible voice that has

touched millions of people all around the world. And that's just what it is. A gift.

You heard a tape of jive and wanted, you have said, to go to South Africa to find out who the musicians were and how they lived. Who were they?

They are a varied group. Some of them were players who lived in Soweto and who were part of popular bands there. Those are the guys I worked with most and those are the guys I brought back to New York to record and to perform on television. Some of the groups come from small, out-of-the-way towns: Tao Ea Matsekha and General M.D. Shirinda, not really well-known groups, who play a different style of music. Tao Ea Matsekha plays a Sotho style of music, General plays Shangaan style. For the most part they don't speak any English, so I didn't get to know them like I did the guys from Soweto, who did speak English and were much more aware of American music. And who had more of a typical musician's chops, unlike General and Tao. Then there's Ladysmith Black Mambazo, just this fantastic sounding group.

Tell me about them: a Zulu gospel group, obviously all spirit, not at all like '50s rhythm and blues. Did they express any trepidation about working with a Western pop musician, mixing their sacred with your profane?

No, because they have done that before. They have sung in English, they have many records out. They must have 20, 25 albums. They are a church group—the leader, Joseph Shabalala, is a reverend. They come from the township of Ladysmith, near Durban. They are Zulu. Joseph handles all the choreography.

It's very much like storytelling. It's very intricate, and all the songs have choreography. They all dance in unison in very interesting movements. Joseph writes songs about what happens in his life every day. He carries a notebook with him always. He writes phrases and thoughts, and he tends to write songs pretty constantly, and they are what happened to him that day and week.

Tell me about the reservations you had about making the trip. You were, by the book, breaking the letter of the UN's international cultural boycott of South Africa.

The only reservations I had were that I didn't want this trip to be misconstrued, to be thought in any way to be in support of the policies of the government of South Africa. I wasn't going to perform, so in that sense I thought it was within the guidelines of the cultural boycott, although technically I wasn't, as it turned out.

I don't think the boycott was intended to block black South African musicians from access to the international music community. I think it was to block the white, discriminating community there from outside nourishment. Whether that is an effective means of bringing about social change remains to be seen. . . . But I certainly support the cultural boycott as a means for the artistic community to express moral outrage. But on the other hand, the *de facto* black musicians union over there is very frustrated at not being able to get their music heard in the world community. They felt they were the victims of a double apartheid, where they were being repressed at home, and then when they were trying to get their music outside, people were resistant to it because they were South African. They just felt that with me, having access to world markets because of being well known, they could get attention.

Don't you think it further confused the issue of your stance on apartheid to do a duet with Linda Ronstadt, who played *Sun City*?

Linda Ronstadt in no way supports the apartheid regime. I don't think she believes in the cultural boycott. She thinks that there are other ways, ways

continued on page 78



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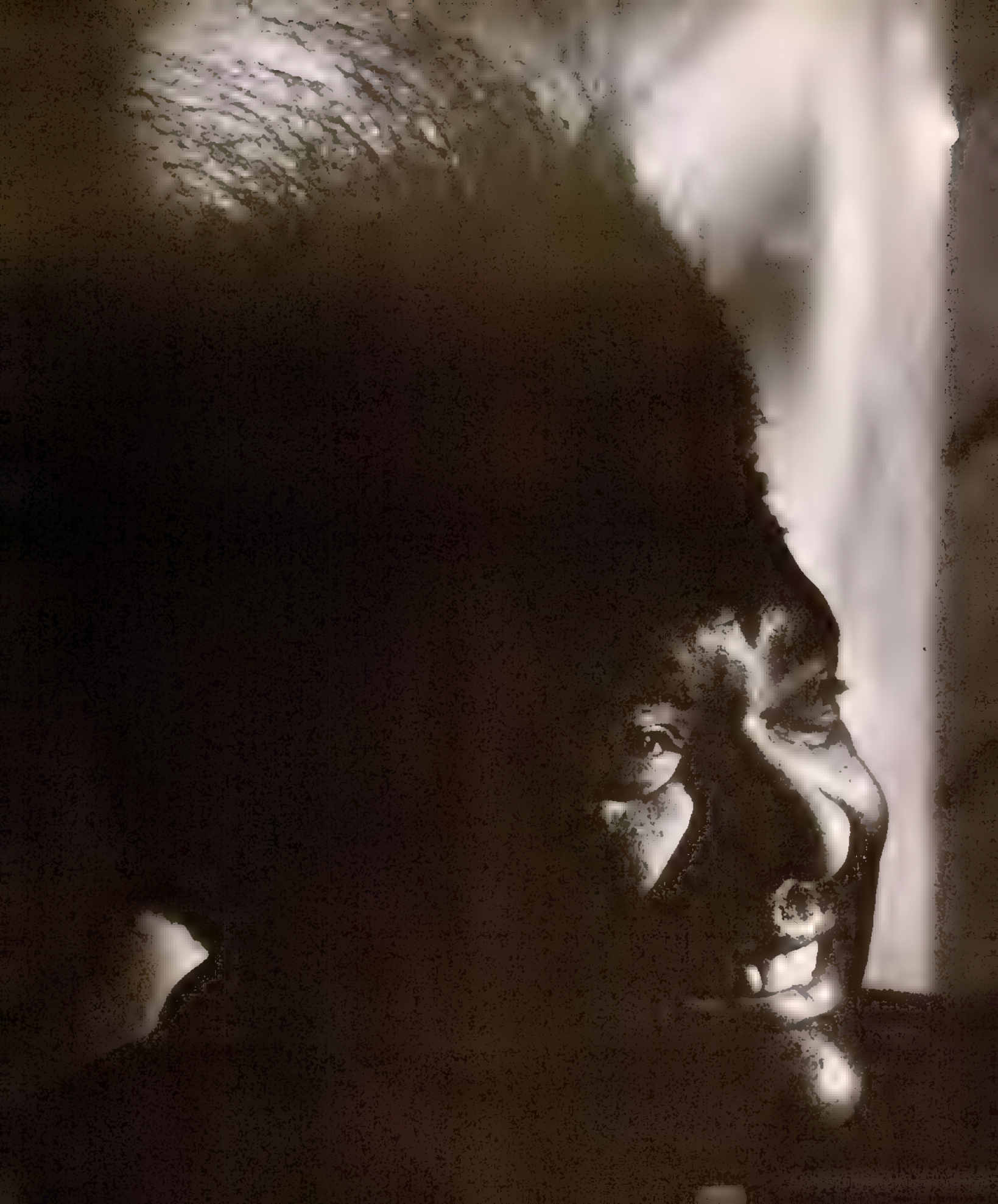
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ALL THE KING'S MEN

It's dangerous to underestimate Don King.

High up in the Las Vegas-Hilton Hotel, Don King sits in his suite sipping orange juice. He had gotten out of bed just a few minutes before. His famous logo, his hair, stands up in defiance, a coif that would make Billy Idol drool with envy. The phones ring incessantly, but King isn't answering.

Twenty-eight stories below, in the lobby of the hotel, the check-in desk is a maelstrom of fighters, ex-fighters, promoters, managers, hookers, and movie stars. The vigil has begun for what the culture of the next century might look back on as some heathen ritual—the heavyweight title fight.

Silence is not one of King's many gifts, but now he sits quietly, staring out at the mountains that ring Las Vegas, a magnificent backdrop in the purple haze of the desert's morning heat. He can afford to relax for a while. The fight is sold out, a \$2 million live gate. What's more, he's firmly in control of the skin racket again, the architect of a hot tournament that will unify the heavyweight title, the man with the action.

The minutes of silence seem like hours as King sits pensively. One wonders, could he be thinking how this whole thing started? A ragged, spindly kid running numbers in Cleveland becomes king of the racket. A bloody fistfight in the street ends in the accidental death of his antagonist. A manslaughter conviction and four years in prison. The pardon by the governor many years later. A meteoric rise as a boxing promoter. Hounded by the FBI and IRS for ten years. Indicted on 24 counts of tax evasion and facing a maximum of 46 years in prison, a grim future for a 54-year-old man, he is finally acquitted by a jury on all counts.

"I'm moving on Hollywood now!" shouts King. "I've already opened offices there. I'm going to make movies. I want to be the black Louis B. Mayer. I have my own sports TV network. Our fights are syndicated throughout the world. I've promoted 150 world's title fights and have a fantastic film library. Film libraries are becoming a big thing. I haven't outgrown boxing, but I do have other ambitions. I want to be a billionaire."

Article by Harold Conrad

Photography by Michael Tighe



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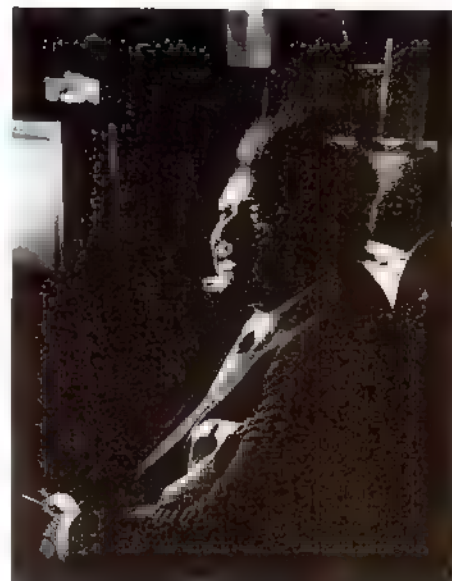
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"How rich are you now?"

"That's all relative. By some people's standards I'm very rich. Listen, if you can count it, you haven't got enough. But in big business, it doesn't matter how much you're worth. It's how much money you have around you. Associating with billionaires on a day-to-day basis, being with them and their families. I'm the godfather of a billionaire's daughter, Meshulam Riklis and Pia Zadora's little girl, Katy.

"I'm very friendly with Kirk Kerkorian, who picked up a billion and a quarter in profits when he sold his stock and his MGM hotel in Las Vegas. Then there's Ken Berg of American Enterprises. He's now the largest stockholder in American Can. They're all good friends, and they take a deep interest in whatever I'm doing.

"I was supposed to have a 15-minute audience with Rupert Murdoch, one of the prime movers in this country. It lasted over three hours, and I put Mr. Murdoch in the numbers business, so to speak. I instigated the Lotto contest he now runs in his *New York Post*."

When King first crashed the big-time fight business, he was regarded as some strange phenomenon. He knew very little about the business end of the sport. The two-syllable fight hustlers looked at him in bewilderment as he quoted Shakespeare and Khalil Gibran. They thought they had a patsy until they sat down at the table over figures. Then there was no more flowery talk. It was all hardball until King won.

In the fight racket, the books on King are balanced. Fifty percent like doing business with him and 50 percent hate him, but the sides keep changing. The "ins" can be out the next day, and the "outs" can be in if they have something King wants.

The outs tell you that King doesn't live up to the letter of his contracts, that he's a publicity nut who steals the limelight from the fighters, that he manipulates boxing commissions, that his dynasty has an unfair stranglehold on the sport. Then they'll say, "But don't quote me," because the outs could be ins overnight, and then they'll tell you what a generous guy he is.

The lament from some of the fighters under the King dynasty has been long and loud. Former heavyweight champion Larry Holmes claims he was like a man in bondage for all those years King had him tied up under contract. But since Holmes earned some \$40 million under the King banner, it was a gilt-edged bondage.

King has so many fighters in his stable he can't keep most of them busy enough to make any real money,

In the fight racket, the books on King are balanced: 50 percent like doing business with him and 50 percent hate him. But the sides keep changing.

but if one of them signs for an outside bout, King sues immediately for breach of contract, because, if nothing else, King protects his interests.

By 9:30 that evening the fight is history and not many are disturbed over the decision, which went to Michael Spinks, although the irate and disagreeable Larry Holmes made what many thought was a successful bid to regain his title. The festivities are continuing at a post-fight party being thrown by King, the Hilton Hotel chain brass, and the boss himself, Baron Hilton. But King is the star among the constellation he has invited to the fight. There's Whoopi Goldberg whooping it up at one table; Sly Stallone surrounded by his bodyguards; Don Johnson in his *Miami Vice* costume; Robert Mitchum, who has been hanging around for days; Chuck Norris in dungarees; several members of Michael Jackson's family, but no Michael; and, among others, a silver-haired, distinguished-looking Tony Curtis.

King hops around from table to table when he isn't dancing. I ask Baron Hilton what he thinks of the evening. "It's a great night," he says. "Don King sold out the fight, a \$2 million gate, and he sold out my hotel, all 1,314 rooms. That makes me very happy."

When you make Baron Hilton happy, it's good for the pocketbook. Above the music one can hear King's Wagnerian laugh.

On Sunday, King, his son Carl, who manages fighters, and I take the red-eye to Chicago where we change planes for Cleveland. A limousine waits at the airport driven by the once formidable heavyweight Earnie Shavers, who now runs King's fight camp near his estate. Sixty miles west of Cleveland, King's 180-acre spread is surrounded by an electrified gate. The house is worth \$5 million, he says, and he thinks it has 22 rooms, but he isn't sure.

"You want to see a \$200,000 bathroom," he asks. And how could I pass up the chance? Later, sitting in the monster living room over a couple of scotch and sodas, I ask about the Jackson Five tour, which King inaugurated with Pepsi-Cola as the sponsor, only to get squeezed out.

"Wait a minute! I wasn't squeezed out. It was a marvelous experience. It was a financial success, and now it's water under the bridge. I don't want to have to go over all that crap again. Besides, who cares. It's long over with."

"How about the \$15 million commercial deal Michael made to do Pepsi commercials?"

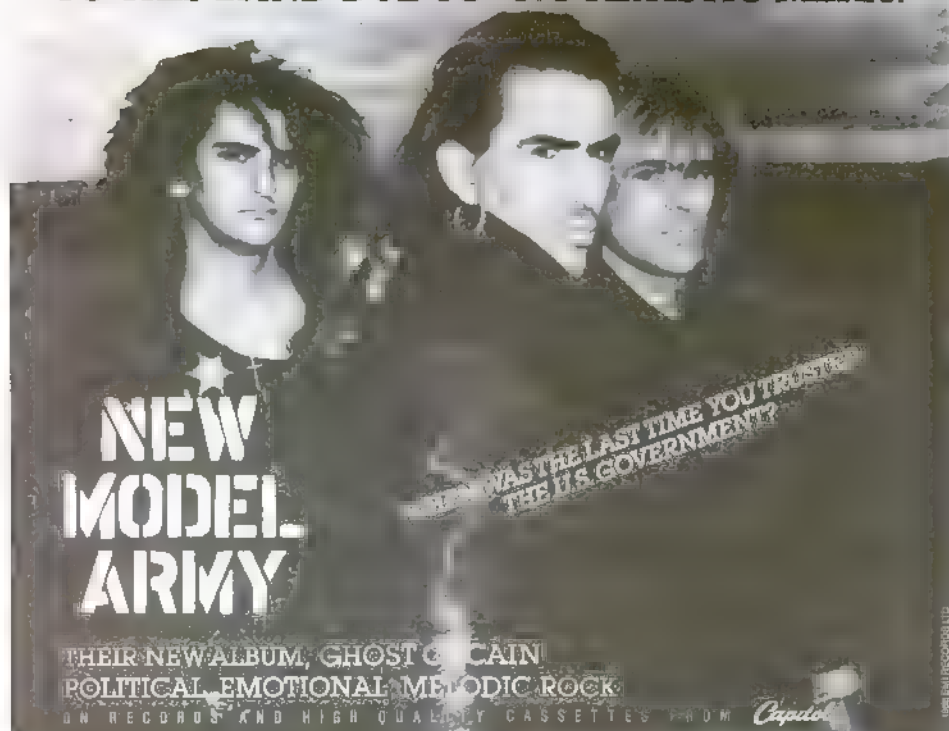
"Incredible. That's my kind of money. You know something, when I first brought Pepsi-Cola into the deal, the Jacksons weren't happy with Pepsi. Now they go behind my back to my contact and pull off this deal. But good luck to them."

Two years ago, as King was taking bold, new steps, the specter of prison walls loomed as it did 20 years ago. He was indicted for tax fraud. The charge: that he had been drawing some of his profits from Vegas's Caesar's Palace boxing promotions from the gambling casino's cage and did not pay taxes on it. The betting was that he would be convicted. Had he come full circle?

"I'm free and clear as a bird now," King says, pounding the coffee table. "But if I didn't have the

continued on page 81

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT REFUSED ENTRY TO THIS BAND DUE TO "NO ARTISTIC MERIT."



REACH "Inside" AND DISCOVER Matthew Sweet.

"Inside" Matthew Sweet is a debut album with several distinct personalities and one very powerful new signature. Singer/songwriter/producer/musician Matthew Sweet expresses his music through nine of the industry's hottest producers and more than a dozen special guest artists. The result is eleven razor sharp cuts including "Save Time For Me" and "Blue Pools."



Listen to Matthew Sweet. The music "Inside" is extraordinary. On Columbia Records and Cassettes.

Produced by Scott Litt, David Kahne, Stephen Hague, Dave Allen, Matthew Sweet, Simon Hinchert, Don Dixon, Alan Ramsey, Francois Revorkin and Ron St. Germain
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The message from
Solomon Burke is: If you got
yourself somebody,
hold on to what you got and
don't try to get no more.

EVERYBODY NEEDS SOMEBODY TO LOVE

Article by Scott Cohen

Photograph by Mark Sarfati



I'm so happy to be here tonight, and once again I'm glad to be in your wonderful city. Hello, New York. And I got a little message for you from somebody whose songs you've known a long time, who may even have changed your life. I'm talking about a gentleman who's become a legend in his own time, somebody considered by many a master showman, an impassioned raconteur, the greatest and most charismatic soul singer of all time; an entrepreneur who sold ice water and sandwiches on his tour bus between dates and popcorn and pork chops on the pavement outside the Apollo between shows. I'm referring to the Bishop of Soul, an ordained minister whose grandmother, 12 years before he was born, dreamed about him, which led her to found a church, Solomon's Temple: The House of God for All People, later known as the Church of Let It All Hang Out; someone who delivered his first sermon when he was 7, was nicknamed the Wonder Boy Preacher at age 9, led spiritual crusades by 12, and, at the height of his career, wore a gold lamé tuxedo with a gold cummerbund while preaching "God, money, and women" to a congregation of pretty broads. Someone

whose grandmother, right before she died in December 1954, gave him a guitar for Christmas and made a prophecy that began to unfold in 1955, when he was discovered at a local talent contest by a top Philadelphia DJ who introduced him to the owner of the Apollo record label and had a big hit with "You Can Run (But You Can't Hide)," cowritten by ex-heavyweight champion Joe Louis.

I'm talking about none other than the King, Solomon Burke; Dr. Solomon Burke, who one summer in the late 1950s, after quitting the music business because he thought his manager and record company were ripping him off, asked a guy standing on the corner of 16th and Ridge in Philadelphia for half a buck, which the man tossed and landed on a sewer grate. So Solomon Burke, the King of Soul, who James Brown once offered \$10,000 to take off his crown and put it on Brown, got down on his hands and knees and attempted to pick it up without dropping it down the sewer, but a voice inside him said, "If you pick up that 50 cents now, you'll be picking up change for the rest of your life," and he kicked the money down the sewer, which made the man very mad, and he



chased Solomon, who ran into the street and got hit by a car, which was driven by a woman whose niece Solomon had been dating. The woman took him home with her, and after that, he went to school and became a mortician, and that's how Solomon Burke became a Doctor of Mortuary Science, with an empire of funeral homes. A few years later, Babe Shivan, intent on managing him, inappropriately parked a red Lincoln in front of Solomon's funeral home and wouldn't move it until he agreed to make a few records—with Atlantic—which included some big hits like "Just Out of Reach," "The Price," "Cry to Me," and "The Word."

There are three words that mean a lot to Solomon, especially if they're true: "I love you." People can say "I love you" and not mean it. They can say it and misuse it. A lot of people don't know how to say it. They say it so much it don't have no meaning. When you use the word "love," be careful. Somebody may be willing to accept it. Somebody's heart may be open. Somebody's mind may be open and wanting and needing love right now. Be careful how you use the word. If you don't mean it, Solomon suggests you say "I like you." If you're not sure about it, say, "I'm

beginning to grow to love you." If you're not positive about it, say, "There's something about you that attracts me," but don't misuse the word love. It could be 4 in the morning, the TV is blank, the children are asleep, and nothing sexual is happening, and you can reach over and tell your baby, "I love you." Whisper it in her ear.

Now, the message I got from Solomon Burke is for every man and woman out there who's ever needed somebody to love: if you got yourself somebody, hold on to what you got and don't try to get no more. Sometimes you get what you want and you lose what you have. There's a song Solomon Burke sings, the same song Wilson Pickett sang and the Rolling Stones covered, that he believes could change the whole wide world. The name of that song is "Everybody Needs Somebody to Love." I had myself somebody. I had a beautiful wife, a couple of lovely kids, a house in the country, a car in the driveway. I had it all, but you know what? I wanted more. I went out and fell in love with somebody else. Somebody whose heart was open. Somebody whose mind was open and wanting and needing love right then. It wasn't selfish

to want two people. It's just that I couldn't commit myself to either one. Are you with me? See, there are all kinds of love: sexual, sentimental, romantic, exclusive, and platonic. There's love based on fantasy, where you love someone while the fantasy's fulfilled and resent them when it's not, and there's unconditional love, where you love someone for what they are, not for what they do. One love isn't necessarily better than another, as long as you share the same goals. The problem was, they wanted my love exclusively, while I wanted theirs unconditionally. I went with my love anyway, and you know where it got me? Into trouble.

The trouble with loving two people, when you don't have the same goals, is that you can end up losing both. That almost happened to me. I had to choose between the two, something I couldn't do, and both ended up resenting me. My soul was divided, and when that happens, this big blank inside fills up with confusion, stress, frustration, pain, illness, and sometimes, yes, even death. I had to decide, so I thought I'd ask Solomon Burke for his advice. After all, he's been married three times, has 21 children and a fleet of Cadillacs, and is a man of God. So I called his headquarters in Beverly Hills, but his phone was disconnected. I called his number in Atlanta, Georgia, but after several days, I got no answer. Then, by chance, I ran into an old friend who had once hung out with Solomon Burke. He had been separated from his wife, and feeling sad and depressed, he too looked to Solomon Burke for wisdom and spiritual inspiration, but you know what Solomon told him? He slapped him on the back and said, "Don't worry, all _____ are the same." I turned to God instead.

A few days later I received Solomon Burke's new album, *A Change Is Gonna Come*, in the mail, and while listening to it on my stereo, it occurred to me that the only way to resolve my problem was if me and the two women spent time together. So my new love came to the country. She met the wife and kids, saw the house and the car, and felt the pain caused by a divided home. Maybe she wanted to be my wife. Maybe she wanted kids, a home, and a car. Maybe it was just a fantasy, but the pain was real. I guess I made my choice, because she left and I stayed. A change had to come.

It's just like the song says: sometimes you get what you want, so be careful about what you ask for. And appreciate what you got. Now, let me hear you clap your hands. Thank you, Savannah. Thank you, Charlotte. Thank you, the Bronx, New York.

King Solomon Burke, all 290 pounds of him.

WITH ENEMIES LIKE THESE, WE NEED FRIENDS

Censorship is like the weather—everyone talks about it, but no one does anything about it.

Which is precisely what makes the fundamentalist attack on rock 'n' roll so dangerous. They're counting on no one doing anything about it.

To raise the hundreds of millions of dollars the TV pitchmen like Swaggart, Falwell, and Robertson do, they need causes. And rock 'n' roll is the perfect target.

There are some very serious problems in America today, but there is no evidence that rock causes any of them. Rock may mirror the torments of society, but it doesn't create them. Rock is not inspired by the Devil, nor condemned by God, just the charlatans who use God as an unlicensed and unlimited endorsement of what is fast becoming a billion-dollar industry.

We formed MUSIC IN ACTION to stand up to this insidious enemy that wants to change the world till it suits them. Join us by simply refusing to shop at stores that censor what you can read or listen to. There are plenty more stores that let you think for yourself. And write to your congressmen and senators and demand they tell you where they stand on rock censorship. This is their election year—don't let them sit on a fence that may be dividing your personal freedoms.

Let them know you care. Or write to us, and we'll send it on.

All it will cost you is a stamp.

What will not protesting cost us?

MUSIC IN ACTION

155 E. 55th St., Suite 6-H, New York, NY 10022

86D

1986—What a year! In China it was the year of the dragon, and in the United States it was the year of the Bear. And the Met. The space shuttle crashed, the Great Peace Marchers almost died in the desert and were generally ignored anyway, and anywhere from two to 28,000 people died of radiation poisoning in Chernobyl, depending on whom you read.

Humbly, we present the names, the faces, the gutter journalism that made '86 the year it was: when Buck Owens left *Hee Haw*, Pia Zadora performed with the London Philharmonic, an Ohio evangelist publicly burned the Mr. Ed theme song, and Max Headroom was art. It was that kind of year.

Review by Glenn O'Brien, Scott Cohen,
and John Leland





AIR FORCE, ARMY, NAVY, MICHELOB MAKE TOP ROCK VIDEOS OF '86

At this year's Cannes Film Festival, the winners of the prestigious Canard D'Or for artistic achievement in rock video were the United States Army, Navy, and Air Force, and the Michelob division of the Anheuser Busch brewing company. Anti-American protesters picketed the awards, which were shunned by many rock video directors, in protest against the million-dollar-a-minute budgets of the military's TV efforts. The Pentagon has denied reports that Michelob will be replacing the Coast Guard as the fifth branch of the US armed forces in 1987.



JOHN McENROE THREATENS TO QUIT TENNIS

John McEnroe was not quite up to his usual form, coming back from a six-month layoff from the tennis tour. After losing several matches, McEnroe threatened to leave tennis altogether and begin a new career as a rock guitarist. He is apparently no slouch on the guitar, having appeared on stage with such artists as Van Halen. Should McEnroe leave tennis behind, Sammy Hagar will replace him on the tour.

BELINDA CARLISLE LOSES 20 POUNDS

Belinda Carlisle, former lead singer of the Go Go's, is now enjoying a successful solo career, thanks to having dropped a quantity of saturated fats reported to be in the neighborhood of 9000 grams. The fat was reportedly donated to the Karen Carpenter Memorial Fat Bank.





Peter Anderson

ZZ TOP CAR DESTROYED

The famed ZZ Top hot rod was crushed by Bigfoot during the filming of a video. The car has been replaced by the ZZ Top space shuttle, the first step in the band's program to eliminate conventional amplifiers and use Earth's atmosphere as a speaker.



Anton Corbijn



Michael Ochs Archives

IKE AND TINA ARE BACK

Ike Turner, spurred on by the enormous success of his old partner, Tina, and inspired by the reunion of Sam and Dave—Sam using an entirely different Dave this time—has decided to reform Ike and Tina with Tina Weymouth of Talking Heads.

BENEFIT FOR AMNESIA INTERNATIONAL

The latest in a long line of benefit concerts was staged this past year in an effort to help those with poor memories. Unfortunately we can't remember who played. The event was hosted by Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist.

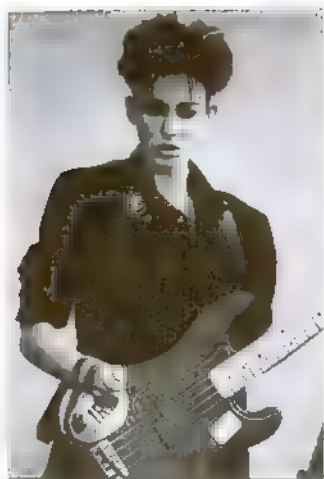


CIA INVESTIGATES SUSPICIOUS NUMBER OF ENGLISH BANDS SIGNED TO AMERICAN LABELS

Beach Boys fan and former CIA director George Bush announced the CIA was in the process of investigating the "highly suspect number of English rock bands signed to American recording contracts." Mr. Bush stated he had been suspicious for some time, but it was not until hearing the Sisters of Mercy that he took action.

"We didn't mind buying up their trucking industry to bail them out," Bush stated, "but when it comes to the minds and hairdos of our young people, something had to be done."

Left: Sisters of Mercy Andrew Eldritch (left) and Gary Marx. Below left: Cail O'Riordan of the Pogues. Bottom: John Lydon.



10TH ANNIVERSARY OF PUNK

1986 marked the 10th anniversary of punk rock. To celebrate the occasion, Joe Strummer of the Clash and Mick Jones of Big Audio Dynamite began speaking to each other again. John Lydon celebrated by spiking his hair, changing his name back to Johnny Rotten, and taking a large sum of money from Malcolm McLaren.

A man and a woman are posed in a biker-themed advertisement. The man, on the left, is wearing a red tank top, blue jeans, and sunglasses, leaning against a motorcycle. The woman, on the right, is wearing a blue denim jacket over a white shirt and blue jeans, also leaning against the motorcycle. The motorcycle is a cruiser style with a large front wheel and a smaller rear wheel. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

KOOL
Milds

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Quitting Smoking
Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health.

© 1996 R.J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO.
12 mg. "tar", 1.0 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.



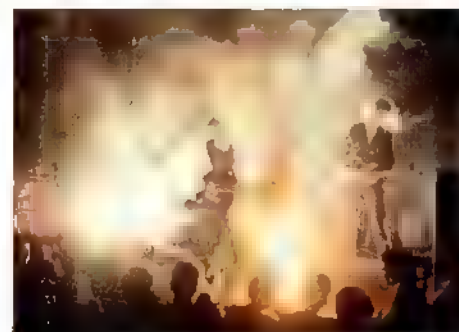
Focus On Sports

GOOSE GOSSAGE APOLOGIZES TO McDONALD'S

Pitcher Goose Gossage of the San Diego Padres, several times winner of the Rolaids Reliever of the Year award, was suspended without pay after making derogatory remarks about the club's management, owner Joan Kroc, and her company, McDonald's. Goose was reinstated after apologizing to all concerned and retracting his statement that McDonald's had "poisoned the world." Goose did not win the Rolaids Reliever award however, after posting ■ McERA that was used by many lottery contestants in the "Play Four."

EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN SET FIRE TO NEW YORK DISCO

Members of the notorious German noise band were pummeled by security guards at New York's famed Palladium after setting fire to two tins of charcoal lighter during a performance there. The Germans claimed not to know that the First Amendment does not protect the right to yell "fire" in a crowded theater. Furthermore, it was reported that the band had misled Palladium management, claiming that the finale of their act consisted merely of making enough crepes suzette to feed the audience. No crepes were found by investigators.



News & Life

BOY GEORGE ARRESTED FOR HEROIN

Boy George was busted for heroin this year when his name was selected from a 30-kilogram pile of shredded copies of the *New Musical Express* by a blindfolded Scotland Yard officer. In an attempt to cure his addiction Boy shaved his head.

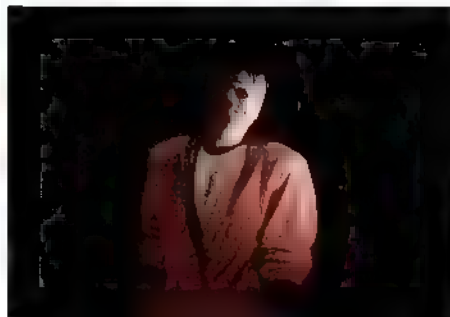




Laura Levine

PRINCESS STEPHANIE HAS HIT RECORD, AND A NEW LINE OF BATHING SUITS

Princess Stephanie, the tempest-tossed scioness of the Royal House of Monaco, who, like her mother Grace Kelly, has enjoyed great success as a fashion model, has followed her mother's lead once again by pursuing a career in show business. Stephanie has already had hit dance records on the continent, including the smash "Je M'aime." She has promised to donate earnings from her recording career to charity. Reports that the leggy princess has hooked up with a punk band called the Dead Grimaldis, however, seem to be unfounded. Instead, the Princess hopes to make a big splash with a new line of swimwear.



Catharina Kruizinga/Star



Michael Putland/Reino Ltd

MADONNA CHANGES IMAGE

After thousands of home video viewers were rumored to be freeze-framing a microsecond of a Madonna performance video in which a breast momentarily popped from Mrs. Penn's brassiere, the chanteuse underwent a radical image change, donning various blouses and dresses for her appearances. Reportedly Madonna has donated the bra to Annie Lennox.

WHAM! BREAKS UP

Whoops. Why?
Where? When?
Who knows?

BOB DYLAN

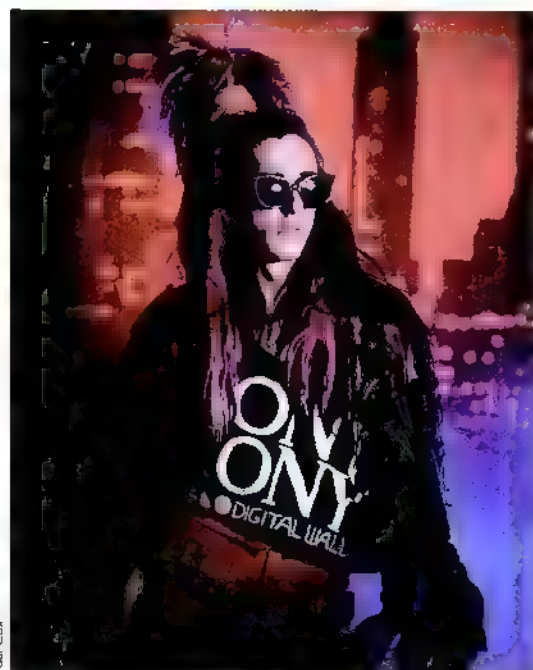
In 1986 Bob Dylan rapped on a Kurtis Blow record, cowrote a song with Carole Boyer Sager, appeared on *20/20*, and acted in a movie. He did not appear on a *Schoolly-D* record, cowrote a song with Marvin Hamlisch, appear on *Hollywood Squares*, or act in a beer commercial.



David Michael Kennedy

Fillmore West reopened. ● In a Media General/Associated Press poll of 18- to 34-year-olds, 40 percent said they felt that rock lyrics had a "bad effect" on teens and pre-teens. Forty-eight percent favored warning stickers on records, and 38 percent said that they had personally been offended by a lyric. They did not mention that the lyric was from "Having My Baby." ● Heavyweight radio consultant Leonard Abrams counseled AOR programmers to play cocktail jazz and new age music, saying that the latter "reminds me of progressive rock in 1966. It will be the next big thing." No wonder we needed Jolt Cola, a soft drink with twice the caffeine and all the sugar of ordinary cola, "crack in a can." ● Natural Choice Industries, makers of Pink Panther Hot Cocoa and Marshmallows, introduced Elvis Presley "Love Me Tender" shampoo, conditioner, moisturizing lotion, and bubble bath oil. ● Yoko Ono announced plans to tour. According to her manager, Sam Havadtoy, "This is her way of thanking her fans." ● Comebacks: James Brown (his 53rd), Aerosmith, Billy Idol, Ornette Coleman, Alice Cooper, the Monkees, Iggy Pop, Berlin, Isaac Hayes, the Mets, fast food. ● Comebacks by fat people: Meatloaf; Emerson, Lake, and Powell; Bachman-Turner Overweight. ● Michael Jackson dolls, originally priced at \$20, were reduced to \$1.98 at New York discount stores. ● Albert Grossman, cofounder of the Newport Folk Festival and manager of Bob Dylan, Peter, Paul and Mary, and others, died of a

heart attack at age 59. ● Metallica broke thrash metal into the Top 40, but lost bassist Cliff Burton when the band's tour bus ran off an icy road in Sweden on September 27th. ● Sigue Sigue Sputnik changed the course of contemporary rock music, but nobody is quite sure how. ● Chuck Berry turned 60. ● Barry Manilow and David Lee Roth both released Spanish-language records, adding credence to rumors that both were once members of Menudo. ● Dexter Gordon and Tom Waits became movie stars, David Lee Roth (*Crazy From the Heat*) and Madonna (*Shanghai Surprise*) didn't. ● Run-D.M.C.'s *Raising Hell* went double platinum. In celebration, fans beat each other's heads in at the group's shows. ● Bob Geldof released a solo album and proved that it wasn't the Boomtown Rats that were holding him back. ● Lawrence Humphrey sued Columbia Records, Def Jam, Rush Productions, and several individuals, claiming that he was really L.L. Cool J, and that he wrote the raps on Radio. ● The forces of darkness and censorship dug in worldwide, as Radio Television Hong Kong and Commercial Radio banned Anita Mui's "Bad Girls." The lyrics to this salacious ditty translated roughly as: "He presses his body against me and kisses me on the brow, his hot breath near my ear had made me hot, making me forget where my rationality is." ● In Irontown, Ohio, evangelist Jim Brown of the Psalms 150 Ministry held a record and tape burning. Among the scorched: the Mr. Ed theme song, which, according to Mr. Brown, played backwards contains the messages, "someone sang this song for Satan" and "this horse is the devil." ● Sly Stone signed with A & M and began putting the finishing touches on an upcoming single. This was in March. ● Buck Owens left Hee



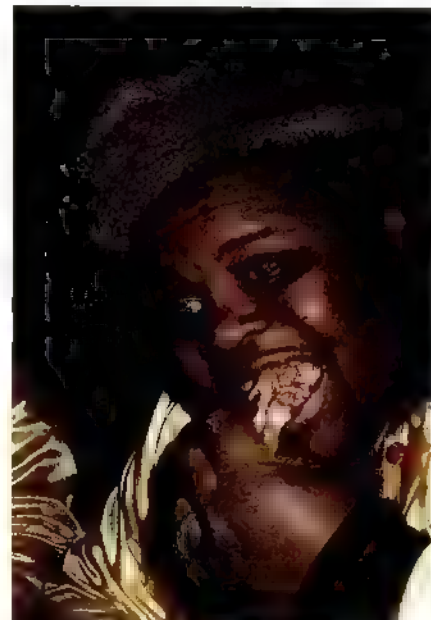
Paul Cox

Haw after 17 years. ● Howie Greenfield, lyricist of "Love Will Keep Us Together," "Breaking Up Is Hard To Do," and "Where The Boys Are," died at age 50, before the PMRC could catch on to him. ● In a nationwide poll of record-store employees, 37 percent admitted to stealing records, 50 percent admitted to taking unauthorized discounts, and 66 percent admitted to other violations, including working while under the influence of drugs. And they say home taping is killing the music industry. ● In an unrelated *PM Magazine/USA Today* poll, Americans named Kenny Rogers as their favorite singer of all time. Proof that we still have a sense of humor. ● The PMRC launched its six-page newsletter, which was promptly banned from Wal-Mart stores for containing material that promoted bestiality and other unnatural practices. ● Max Dinning, author of the Penguins' "Earth Angel," died in his sleep at age 51. ● Prince bombed at the movies. ● Poco played a reunion gig, but they were outgrossed on the year by Jimmy Swaggart by about \$150 million, less the band's free drinks. ● Mattel Toys held auditions for a singing Barbie.

Top: Metallica's Lars Ulrich. Center: Sigue Sigue Sputnik's Tony James. Right: the Fat Boys' Human Beatbox.



Matt Weiss



Peter Anderson



THE YEAR IN VIDEO

It's hard to say where the year began and where it ended. For us it began with David Lee Roth's "California Girls" and ended with David Lee Roth's "Crazy From the Heat." And "Just a Gigolo." That was really spectacular, too.

It was a good year for videos. There were fewer trucks than last year, and maybe more buses, because there were more tour videos this year.

There was less of an emphasis on hairdos among male performers this year. And more emphasis on women's hairdos. Nona Hendryx had some doozies. Nona was one of the hair leaders of the year. It was a kind of reestablishment of a more normal order of hair.

There were a lot of references to the White Rock girl, and a lot of fairyland videos, featuring munchkins and elves. Tom Petty probably started that trend two years ago. And there were fewer Star Trek-influenced videos. Probably the space shuttle explosion put an end to that.

There were more fashion models in videos this year. People were finally jumping on the Billy Joel-Ric Ocasek bandwagon. Also, there was less dancing and more posing. Concert shots were

up this year, maybe because budgets were down. Actually, the budgets were the same, but since prices went up, they got less for it. The next step will be videos just showing the records going around and really well-dressed people sitting in nice apartments listening to them.

This was the year for the soundtrack album and video. Next year we'd like to see more videos with subtitles, so you can tell what the lyrics are, and a lot more undersea videos. That's one area that's been neglected. We're looking for Jacques Cousteau to emerge as a major video director this year. It's already rumored that he's been poking around Simon LeBon's yacht.

Gene Cisco and Roger Egbert



VAN HALEN SIGNS DAVID CLAYTON-THOMAS AS NEW SINGER

Van Halen released their biggest album yet and embarked on an enormously successful world tour. And all without their superstar vocalist David Lee Roth, husband of Diana Roth of the Supremes. Roth is enjoying great success himself with his new album, *Sonrise Saravaje*, and has been called the Julio Iglesias of Dee Sniders. Meanwhile, Van Halen surprised everyone by signing as their new singer David Clayton-Thomas, formerly of Blood, Sweat and Tears and Maxwell House Coffee, who beat out hundreds of other applicants for the spot, including Jackie Stewart, Dick Cavett, Joe Montana, and David Frost.

Only David Lee Roth knows when the year began and ended. Caught here with wife, Diana, and the Supremes (not shown).

PREDICTIONS '87

Using tarot cards, Rock Kenyon, a certified psychic in Lily Dale, New York, the oldest and largest spiritual community in America, made the following predictions. Despite his name, Rock is not familiar with rock 'n' roll and answered the questions based purely on his reading of the cards.

Will Madonna and Sean Penn make a record together?

I pick the Wheel of Fortune. Judging from this card, I believe there are already tracks set down for it, but whether it will be done in 1987—I don't think so. They are working on it. It will depend upon how it turns out. They seem to have a manager, or someone like that, who will determine whether the quality is up to standards. Currently, they're going through a difficult cycle, and I'm told that they're certainly trying to overcome it and that much of the dissension is due to adverse publicity.

Will Patti Smith be making her long-awaited comeback?

I pick the Fool card for her. That shows someone on the brink of doing something, with her eyes on the sky and not on the ground. So that shows she's not being realistic. From what I'm getting, I'd say no, although she'd like to. She's still living in the past, and things have changed, so that her connections and her style do not seem appropriate to what's going on today.

Following the lead of Don Johnson and Philip-Michael Thomas, will Simon and Simon put out a record?

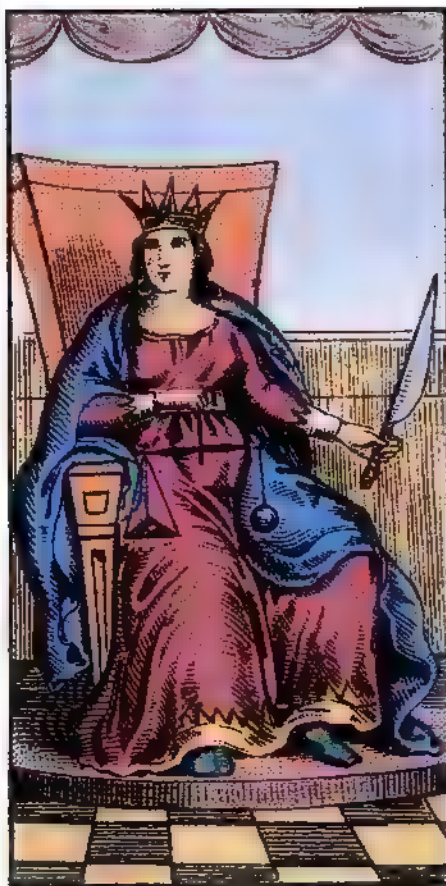
I pick the Hanged Man. That shows them upside down; they're trying to do something they haven't done, but that they can do. There is a circle around the head, which, in my opinion, shows a record that is successful. Apparently, negotiations are going on, but they aren't set now. But if they are, it seems it will be a big success.

Will Prince make another movie?

I pick the Star. That means this person is spreading himself too thin. The Star shows someone who is putting out all his creative energy on the earth and the sea, while not looking upwards toward the stars. It seems to me that this wouldn't be a good year for Prince to make a movie.

Will Jolt Cola sponsor rock 'n' roll events?

I pick the Sun, which, as a matter of fact, is a cola color. The card shows a child revealing himself. That would indicate, yes, they will, and whoever is engaged in this will get a lot of money and success. However, I feel that the cola itself will not be a success. They'll be



putting a lot of money into advertising, which the soda industry can be happy about, but I suggest that whoever can make the professional connections do them quickly, because the cola will not be received too well.

Do you see more suicides among teenagers as a result of listening to heavy metal lyrics?

I pick the card of Judgment, and that card shows people coming out of many caskets. In general, I'm being told there is an overcoming, that the people listening to this music are getting a spiritual awareness, so I see less suicides.

Will Cher have a new rock 'n' roll boyfriend?

Oh no, I pick the Devil. That does show a romantic entanglement, and it shows someone who isn't on the proper path for her. It shows someone who ties her down. This person, whoever it is, will try to exploit her. It seems she's set up for that. She seems to have a life pattern of choosing the wrong people, people who aren't helping her. So

from what this card shows the answer would be yes, unfortunately.

Will Ric Ocasek gain weight this year?

I pick the Empress, and the Empress is sitting in the forest enjoying herself, and if one enjoys oneself, one does put on weight. She's holding a wand, which looks like an ice cream cone, so unfortunately, that shows this issue is going to be difficult for Ric. So I would think he should be very careful if he doesn't want to put on weight.

Will John McEnroe come out with a rock record?

I pick the Tower, a sign that this is not a good idea. He just doesn't seem to have the proper sense of rhythm, which is important, I would think.

Will Jerry Lee Lewis take a new wife?

I pick the Hermit, the card of a loner. According to this card, the answer would be no. He has his lamp lit and he's looking, but he seems to be retreating into himself an awful lot. He appears to be having difficulty dealing with the rest of the world. He isn't really shining, and he has to if he wants to attract someone.

Will James Brown get a brand new bag?

I pick the card called Temperance, and that shows someone who wants to appear as if he can walk on water, but he can't. On the other hand, water pours from cup to cup, which means the economic situation will be good. Now, there's also a pyramid on his chest, but there isn't any luggage here, so that must mean he'll be getting rid of his old luggage.

Will Jimmy Swaggart make a pop record?

I pick the Magician. That shows someone with all the tools and the connections to do this, so I would presume, yes, he certainly will.

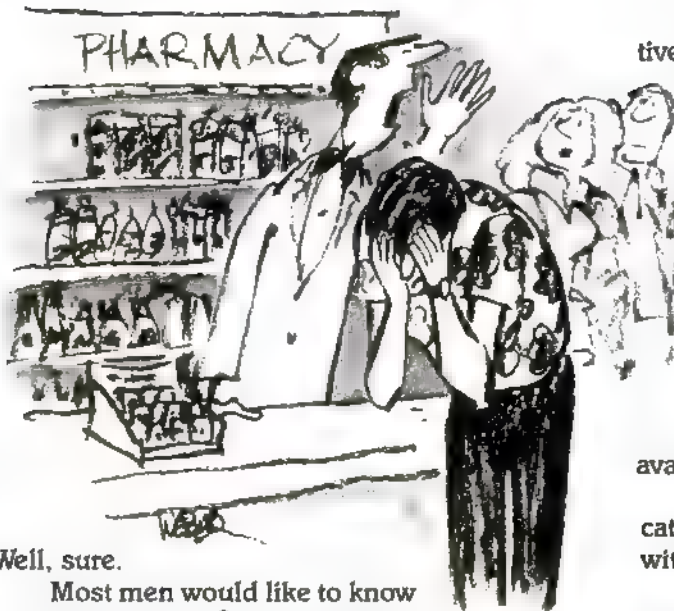
Do you see cocktail jazz and new age music as the next big thing?

What I pick is the Chariot card, and what I hear when picking it up is a tinny kind of music, whatever that means. Now, this card shows no specific direction for these two types of music, so I don't see them taking over big. It's still a possibility. Apparently, no major record company has taken an interest in either one, which is necessary for that to happen.

Will Spin overtake Rolling Stone this coming year?

I pick Justice. That means you will get what you deserve.

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of sending ideas into the country, exposing people to them. I don't think Linda Ronstadt would ever play Sun City again. I know her politics and don't think it's incompatible to put her on the record.

But again, I think this record is about, primarily, music, and only by inference about politics. It doesn't take a stance on whether Buthelezi should be given a voice in the leadership as opposed to Mandela, on whether Desmond Tutu can unify. It doesn't deal with those issues or the politics of South Africa, because I really am in no position to comment on them. I don't know about it enough, and my entire trip was about two weeks, and the time was spent in a recording studio. What do you think of blunt, political statements like the "Sun City" record?

I think in principle this idea of politics, which is suggestive and open-ended, can be more powerful than the newspaper headline of "Don't Play Sun City"—blunt, narrow.

There is a difference in what messages are conveyed by the different media. What you can say in an editorial on TV or in a newspaper has a different impact, a different tone, when you say it in music. They say they made it to make people aware of the situation. And it probably did make some people more aware, although it's something that's on the news every day, and if you are talking about reaching an audience that doesn't read the papers or watch the news, then I don't think they really care about it anyway. So I'm not sure how effective it is. But to whatever degree it is effective, that's great. It helps. But personally, I didn't play Sun City, and I was asked to play Sun City. I turned it down. I don't know whether the Ramones saying, "We ain't gonna play Sun City" means anything, because nobody

ever asked them!

But as a symbolic gesture, it adds weight, it adds momentum to the anti-apartheid movement. I think my record also contributes to that, but in a different style. It definitely adds to the feeling we have about South Africa, to the motion toward the political situation.

Well, not necessarily. It doesn't add to the feelings Jerry Dammers, who wrote "Free Nelson Mandela," has about the country. Dammers has had strong words in Britain recently about Simon's efforts. He is far from alone. Nothing obligates Simon to take a stand—except history, the history working out now in South Africa. There is precisely one song on *Graceland* that addresses the facts of life under apartheid. "Homeless" says: those without shelter in South Africa are tragic victims. And... that's all. This album could mean many things, or nothing, to all kinds of people—those pro- or anti-cultural boycott, yuppies with money invested in apartheid, the apathetic, the *New Republic* reader. Choosing to think of South Africa as predominantly a set of great musical traditions is valid in a way, but another South Africa keeps intruding: the one on fire. Who knows what will happen next Friday, next year? It's easy to believe that history will kick the man's ass.

No, in the long run, this isn't much of a South African record. African sounds may be the bones of *Graceland*, far more than salsa, say, was the key to Simon's Latinized "Late in the Evening." But this is not the Goatman's record. Simonizing the jive's rawness with 48-track production, the album is tasteful, the sound not jumping. It's not that the process kills the beats, but it redefines them, pushes them into the background. This is a singer-songwriter's album, yeah: its themes are random New York encounters and not much less random love.

How things like a (metaphoric) good beat and decomposing bring us together. Here's the best thing mbaqanga, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Sunny Ade's great steel guitarist Demola Adepoju, the pennywhistler Morris Goldberg, and so forth, did for Paul Simon: they gave him the strength and playfulness he needed to fuckin' cheer up. At last, no more wavelets of pretty misery and sobriety and gravity and *feh* washing over you.

Graceland's better than that. The music *does* have swing to it, and a goofy thing like "You Can Call Me Al" works in all the ways that the equally goofy "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover" never did. It's about a silly, beautiful pennywhistle solo and salvation and the things that can connect them.

Simon has said there's a line in "Graceland" that freed him: "Losing love is like a window in your heart/Everybody sees you're blown apart, everybody sees the wind blow." Having said it, he was free. Having signed on a lot of great musicians, working to make sense of a lot of varying traditions, he doesn't just say he wants grace, he shines a little of it in your face.

He's listening to the Jesus and Mary Chain, the Smiths, and the Cocteau Twins. He says he wouldn't ever want to put a self-censoring sticker on a record. He's pretty down on contemporary hit radio, on the vagaries of the music industry today. "The bigger the corporation, the more pressure there is to be a mainstream act," he says. "And that act today is not very daring, it's not gonna be controversial. That's what life is. That's the truth. And you can battle, and you might win, but you will definitely have a fight on your hands." Even so, he doesn't sound down about it, doesn't inflict the conversation with a trace of the petulant lassitude that soaked *One Trick Pony*'s anti-biz script a few years ago. This is a different guy. It's the difference one goatman can make.



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**CISCO & EGBERT:
"AT THE VIDEOS"**

moving images

In which Cisco confesses that he always wanted a pair of Mary Jane pumps.

CISCO: Hi, I'm Gene Cisco, rock video critic of the *Middletown Shopping News*.

EGBERT: And I'm Roger Egbert of the *Middletown Plain Dealer*. This month At the Videos we'll be looking at videos by Berlin, Run-D.M.C. with Aerosmith, Glass Tiger, and Robert Palmer.

CISCO: But first we're going to look at Daryl Hall in "Dreamtime."

EGBERT: It looks like Spin Art, one of the art movements of the late '60s that never really made it. Various layers of swirling film are overlapped, creating a veritable phantasmagoria of images, both natural and, uh...

CISCO: Plastic. We now see that Daryl is playing guitar in a tree in a forest with his motorcycle jacket on. Now we see aerial shots of an incredible chateau—it could be just outside Rome or Paris, it could be Venice or the English countryside.

EGBERT: No, that's Daryl's house in Westchester. It's right next to Reverend Moon's house.

CISCO: It looks like Buckingham Palace. There's a great-looking girl inside who looks like an outtake from a Ric Ocasek video. Now we see Daryl as one of the heads on Mt. Rushmore.

EGBERT: Your basic gargoyle makeover.

CISCO: Now we're back in Westchester county.

Palmer looks funny with his real band. He's in his Armani suit, and they're all wearing Fruit of the Loom Italian T-shirts.

EGBERT: We see the maze of hedges in Daryl's backyard that he had built to duplicate the one in *The Shining*.

CISCO: Do you think that's really his house? It must cost a fortune just to heat it.

EGBERT: Well, as we see here, it has fireplaces.

CISCO: And no furniture. Maybe he burned it for heat.

EGBERT: It's possible that the dry ice he uses to get that mist on his floors ruined all the furniture. Wait. Look how the beautiful girl is gliding across the living room. There's a hockey rink under that mist! That's the steam from the ice. This is really a multileveled video.

CISCO: It's got animation, the hands of time, a garden based on the I-Ching. But I keep waiting for something to happen, and nothing does.

EGBERT: Yes, this video seems to be influenced by the existential French filmmaker Alain Resnais. I particularly

like the lava lamp special effect on the forest of violins.

CISCO: Those are cellos playing themselves.

EGBERT: Autocellos!

CISCO: I don't see why Hall couldn't have had John Oates in this video.

EGBERT: Well, it is from his solo album, but I'll bet there is a hidden cameo appearance by John Oates in here somewhere. Maybe that's him burning in the fireplace.

CISCO: Next we have Berlin in "Take My Breath Away" from the film *Top Gun*. It opens up in a plane wreck. The whole front of the plane has fallen off. We cut to scenes from the film. Tom Cruise making a date with Kelly McGillis. Tom Cruise on a motorcycle in a palm tree-infested environment.

EGBERT: Oh wow! Now the chanteuse from Berlin is singing on top of an old F-104 out in the desert. That must belong to the National Guard. I think

they're the only ones that still fly those old jalopies.

CISCO: Except for America's used-interceptor clients.

EGBERT: It is a cool-looking plane, though. I think that's the plane Chuck Yeager set the altitude record in. This video actually takes place in an airplane graveyard or spare parts lot.

CISCO: It looks like a good place to take a date.

EGBERT: I wonder if the Navy paid for this video. You could never get into the Navy with haircuts like the boys in Berlin have. The singer's diaphanous gown is all covered with airplane grease. She must be a mechanic. I hope she doesn't work for any of the airlines I take. She's got really weird hair. It looks like blonde with blue streaks.

CISCO: That's more airplane grease.

EGBERT: She should wear a shower cap when she works on those planes. Wow, there's a wrecked MiG!

CISCO: Now Tom and the girl are having a big fight on the Santa Monica freeway.

EGBERT: Now he's kissing Dobie Gillis, I mean Kelly McGillis. Now Tom's in his cockpit. You know, Gene, I find it odd, these trendy types singing about love in the Navy. Maybe it's not odd, though. I guess the Navy is defending our freedom to be kooky.

CISCO: This is the No. 1 album in America.

EGBERT: It is? Wow! But what about the band's being named Berlin? Is that some subtle reference to the Cold War, or what?

CISCO: I think they're named after Irving Berlin. That's as American as Budweiser.

EGBERT: Next we have Run-D.M.C.

Robert Palmer: What do the girls see in him?



Ken Hooton/Retna Ltd.

with Aerosmith in "Walk This Way." It begins with two groups in a rehearsal studio, separated by a not very sound-proof wall. Each group is annoyed by the sounds coming from the next room. The wall between represents the barrier between Rhythm Radio and AOR. That's what you've got to cross over.

CISCO: It's too bad Aerosmith isn't wearing black porkpie hats and white Adidas like Run-D.M.C. Steven Tyler just took his mike stand and, out of incredible annoyance, broke through the symbolic wall, and now they're jamming together.

EGBERT: He really has nice teeth. But their fashion look is a little old. They dress like Keith Richards and Jimmy Page dressed in 1970. Afghan thrift shop.

CISCO: It must be economical. Maybe they're wearing Led Zeppelin's hand-me-downs.

EGBERT: Run-D.M.C., though, has made a fashion breakthrough. They've taken the next step beyond untied shoelaces on their Adidas: no shoelaces whatsoever. Everybody will be doing it in '87.

CISCO: Now both groups are jamming on the same stage, although virtually everyone in the audience is white.

EGBERT: I must say, Joe really holds his own on the rap.

CISCO: He's the greatest Mick Jagger imitator of them all.

EGBERT: He has the biggest lips in North America. I liked that video.

CISCO: Me too. I'd love to see it again.

EGBERT: Maybe later, Gene. Now we



Tom Rausche/Reino Ltd

Is she an airplane mechanic or Berlin's chanteuse?

have Glass Tiger in "Don't Forget Me (When I'm Gone)." Yet another example of the concert videos we've been barraged with in recent months.

CISCO: This concert takes place in an interior designer's studio.

EGBERT: This is just the opposite of the heavy metal concert videos we've grown so accustomed to.

CISCO: This is lumpy, limp...

EGBERT: Flaccid, anemic, baby-fatty, ungraceful... if you'll notice, all the

You could never get in the Navy with haircuts like the boys in Berlin have.

people in the audience clapping over their heads are clapping out of time.

CISCO: The horns sound like they're made out of aluminum foil.

EGBERT: The unattractive male singer has Mary Jane pumps on.

CISCO: I wonder how he gets them on those big feet.

EGBERT: He must buy them at the drag queen store. Those are really fruity.

CISCO: I always wanted a pair.

EGBERT: Gene, I'm shocked.

CISCO: They used to be really cool.

EGBERT: You wouldn't wear them with white socks like this guy, would you?

CISCO: No. No socks.

EGBERT: No socks? Maybe I could see wearing them with some manly argyles.

CISCO: This video is really shit.

EGBERT: That's why Newton Minnow called television "a vast wasteland," Gene. Remember last month when we were commenting on how microphones get in the way of singers in videos? Well, this is one case where even a cordless mike doesn't help. In this guy's hands it looks like a big dick. This singer should be wearing a goalie's mask.

CISCO: How did these guys get a record contract?

EGBERT: They must be from England.

CISCO: Or Canada, where bands work for the government.

EGBERT: He's stripping down to his T-shirt now. He's as hefty as Julian Schnabel.

CISCO: Is he wearing eye makeup?

EGBERT: Yeah, it's blue.

CISCO: Is he wearing nail polish, too?

EGBERT: No, but he's got a little gold earring. And the bass player has on lizard jeans.

CISCO: The lead singer has Guess Who? jeans on.

EGBERT: Is that a good brand?

CISCO: No. But after a couple of hits, we may see him in Calvins.

EGBERT: The only really interesting fashion statement here is that the drummer has bare feet. Maybe his drum pedal has one of those Dr. Scholl's stimulator insoles pasted on it. Then he could stimulate all the acupressure points in his feet with those hundreds of rubber nubs as he keeps up that deadening, monotonous beat.

CISCO: If that's so, it's the only stimulating thing about that video. Next we have Robert Palmer in "I Didn't Mean to Turn You On."

EGBERT: Isn't that an old Grateful Dead tune? I guess not. Anyway, we see Robert Palmer working out with his all-female, all-fashion-model band. They're all turned out in black cocktail sheaths and black opera gloves. His backup dancers are all in white cocktail sheaths. Robert is in a basic black suit, black tie, white shirt. The girls all look like Paris models.

CISCO: Is Robert Palmer well known for turning people on, Rog?

EGBERT: I'm not really aware of that, Gene. But if the girls in his ensemble are representative of his fans, I wouldn't mind going to a Robert Palmer concert. Frankly, though, I'm not quite sure what they see in him.

CISCO: Well, let's ask a girl. Hello.

GIRL: Hello.

CISCO: What do you see in Robert Palmer?

GIRL: I met Robert Palmer. He came into this house I was staying at in Nassau. He was wearing a really tiny bathing suit. I thought he was an American baseball player: blond, suntanned, clean cut. Then I heard this really thick, Northern English accent. It was so incongruous.

CISCO: Did it turn you on?

GIRL: No. He is sophisticated, but he's kind of bland. I guess that's what people like. I think people like sexless people.

CISCO: But Rog and I like these girls because they're sexy.

EGBERT: Maybe girls like bland guys because they make them stand out. They don't have to worry about their date upstaging them. If the girls in this video were in a David Lee Roth video, Roth would still be the center of attention. In this video, all you want to do is look at the girls.

GIRL: They've been trying to get those girls to go to parties to promote this record. The reason they won't do it is that they don't really look like that.

EGBERT: Well, even without makeup, how bad could these girls look? They sure look better than Robert's real band. He looks really funny with his real band. He's there in his Armani suit, and they're all wearing Fruit of the Loom Italian T-shirts.

CISCO: He should stick with these girls onstage and have his band play the real instruments behind a curtain.

EGBERT: I must say, though, that as lovely as these girls look, I'd still make them take off all that lipstick before they kissed me.

GIRL: I have a girlfriend who just gave up lipstick. She's trying to do 90 days without lipstick.

EGBERT: Is she in Cosmetics Anonymous?

GIRL: It's just Lipstick Anonymous.

EGBERT: You know, I sometimes think that Robert Palmer is still in show business because of his strong resemblance to Chris Blackwell, the founder of Island Records.

CISCO: Maybe Blackwell is Robert Palmer.

EGBERT: That's an interesting theory, Gene.

CISCO: I still think that you're Robert Tepper, Rog.

EGBERT: I've heard a rumor that you're Robert Weir from the Grateful Dead, Gene.

CISCO: Well, unfortunately, we've run out of column, Rog. But we'll see you all again next month At the Videos.

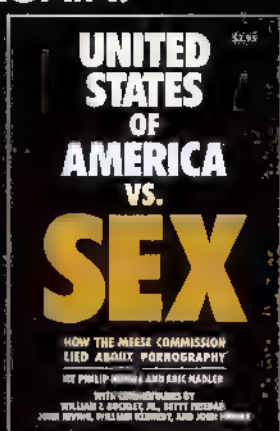
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money for high-powered counsel like the Edward Bennett Williams offices, I'd be behind bars right now. That's why I love America. If I was in Russia, I'd have wound up a black snowball in Siberia. I was given my day in court and found innocent by my peers.

"My whole defense cost me around \$7 million. It went on for 10 years. The FBI, IRS, and even Interpol kept harassing me and investigating me and never convicted me of anything." But King's executive vice-president, Connie Harper, was convicted of tax fraud and sentenced to one year in jail.

"Connie was a victim," says King. "The sentence was totally unfair. They couldn't get me after all the money and time they spent, so they hung something on her. It was their way of getting back at me."

The FBI has had a special hard-on for King and has seemed determined to trap him at any cost. Finally, the Bureau reached into its bag of dirty tricks and came up with its sleaziest gambit, an Abscam-type sting. Here's the scenario:

A shiny black Rolls eases to the curb of a posh apartment house in Manhattan. A young man steps out, slams the door with a flourish, and buttons the jacket of his beautifully tailored suit. The doorman salutes him as he heads for the ornate entrance of the building.

This man looks like somebody, like a winner. He is president of a boxing organization called TKO Promotions, with offices at the Penta Hotel opposite Madison Square Garden. He has a partner and a secretary. His company is said to have a bankroll of from \$7 million to \$10 million. An Illinois bank says it has several million on account for him.

But who is this guy, really? His name is Reggie Barrett. The Rolls Royce is rented and paid for by the FBI, as are his fancy apartment, his new wardrobe, his



Ebar Roberts

Don King and the Jacksons (L-R) Marlon, Emanuel Lewis, Michael, Randy, Tito, and Jackie.

offices, and his credit cards. His secretary is an FBI employee, and his "partner," Victor Quintana, is an undercover agent.

The sting is for Barrett to infiltrate the boxing business and con King into some illegal act. Barrett has been in and out of jail. Knowing that the FBI had been on King's tail for years, he got this brilliant idea and contacted them with a plan to nail King.

The FBI must have been deaf and blind when they bought his deal. For openers, it was ludicrous pitting a small-town hustler against the street-smart King.

I knew Reggie Barrett when he was one of Muhammad Ali's numerous freeloaders. He is one of the scoundrels of the world, but a charming one. His

problem has always been that he had more guts than brains. Once, in San Diego, he asked me to lend him my rented car. Said he had to drive downtown to pick up a few things. He never came back. He drove my car all the way the hell home to South Carolina.

In the end, the FBI was the victim of its own sting, conned by Barrett. He got what he wanted: he lived like a millionaire for more than a year, with all the fringe benefits. God knows how much of our money the FBI pissed away on the caper. It was well over a million. Barrett later went back to jail, but it was a hell of a party while it lasted.

"I had no idea who those guys were," says King. We're now back in New York, in the music room of his fashionable East Side town house. "They said they were fight promoters, and it didn't occur to me that I never heard of them. Barrett is telling me that he has this guy who is loaded and wants to get in the fight business and is ripe to be taken."

"Didn't that seem strange to you?"

"Not really. I have all kinds of crazy guys cross my desk with nutty deals. I listen to them for a few minutes and then get rid of them. I told Barrett we ran a successful international business and weren't interested in that kind of stuff. They kept hemming and hawing, and actually I thought they were pretty stupid. Barrett called me several times with more schemes of how we could rip off a lot of money. I still never dreamed that this was some kind of sting, but I kept brushing him off. Finally, they just seemed to fade away." As he dismisses all of this talk about entrapments and FBI stings, King's mood brightens. Outside on the street, he's a cult figure. Cab and bus drivers honk their horns at him.

"Isn't this marvelous," King says musically. "I love this country. I love America. Only in America could this happen for a guy like me to go from the streets to the suites."

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AM300E

Ken and Barbie have abandoned their Dream House for the lure of the stage—the rock 'n' roll stage. Now their names and likenesses, in the forms of Dreamglow Ken and Barbie and the Rockers, are available and can be bought à la carte or with the Rockers stage. Barbie even comes with her own cassette. They have joined that glittering firmament of musical couples—Sonny and Cher, Hall and Oates, Ferdinand and Imelda . . .

SPIN caught up with Ken and Barbie in New York. They were enjoying a little R&R before embarking on "The Barbie Rockers UK Tour."

So, isn't this a little off the beaten track? Ken and Barbie singing rock 'n' roll?

KEN: (bristling, lighting a Kool) Why the hell not? I mean, what's Charlie Sexton got that I don't?

BARBIE: (sighing) You don't really want me to answer that, do you? But what brought this on? Do you have any prior performing experience?

BARBIE: Well, I've been a cheerleader . . . for about 27 years.

How old are you two, anyway?

KEN: Actually, we don't really know.

See, we were about 18 years old when we were born.

BARBIE: That was 27 years ago. But we haven't aged.

What happened to your Dream House?

BARBIE: It became a nightmare. So we traded it for a condo.

What kind of music do you listen to?

BARBIE: Metal Machine Music is our favorite album. Also Prince, Charlie Sexton . . .

KEN: The Newlywed Game theme.

BARBIE: I thought that was Bob Eubanks's hair.

What do you read?

BARBIE: Oh, Ken favors the light, inspirational touch like Brett Easton Ellis and Lautreamont.

KEN: Barbie favors Joe Bonomo's oeuvre and Seventeen. Barbie doesn't age well.

BARBIE: (snappish) I don't age at all. (anxious to change the subject) Now that we've got our hot Rockers stage, we're anxious to branch out. In what way?

BARBIE: We'll have to have people to play there. Which means more Barbies.

KEN: (giggling) Like Hardcore Barbie, complete with hairspray and safety pins.

BARBIE: (shooting him a look) . . . and Rockabilly Barbie, complete with wig collection, white cowboy boots, and astonishing proportions. Barbiewood?

BARBIE: Anything's possible. Also, Eurotrash Ken, with asymmetrical platinum blond hair and earrings.

Billy Idol already exists.

BARBIE: After all these years, Ken at least deserves real hair. (sweetly) Especially in light of everything else he lacks.

KEN: (nastily, pouring tequila) Listen, did you know "I Dig Your Wig" by the



Chris Carroll

After 27 years of not bending,
Ken and Barbie rock out.

THE NEW NEW YORK DOLLS

Interview by Sukey Pett

Ben Vaughn Combo was written about Bouffant Barbie?

You don't really want to fight during this interview, do you?

KEN: We can't forget Rasta-Ken and Barbie. . . .

Haysi Fantayzee beat you to it.

BARBIE: (pouring herself a shot) Oh well. And we've got a Nerd Ken in the works. Dorky glasses, highwaters, leaky pens for shirt pocket are extra.

KEN: Geek chic.

What are some of your other plans?

KEN: We'd like to open Ken and Barbie's Dream Mesquite Grill.

BARBIE: I'd like to make a video.

KEN: (attempting to cozy up to her) People always criticize the way Barbie moves. I don't think she looks any worse on stage than Belinda Carlisle.

Why does the Dreamglow Ken, without cassette, cost more than the Barbie Rocker with?

BARBIE: Men have always made more than women. Women get—what is it?—63 cents on every dollar a man makes.

What's all this "Dreamglow" stuff,

anyway?

BARBIE: That's what comes from renting a summer home too near Three Mile Island. Another one of Ken's stellar ideas.

KEN: (now drunk) You know what? What?

KEN: Barbie and I have never had intercourse.

BARBIE: Ken, you're a stupid prick!

KEN: Yeah, that's the problem. I don't have one.

BARBIE: Sex, is, ah, problematic. We tried a ménage à trois once with one of our friends.

Which one?

KEN & BARBIE: (in unison) We can't tell you!

Midge?

KEN & BARBIE: (giggling)

Alan?

BARBIE: (hooting) He had no interest in me.

KEN: Yeah, he thought I had a nice ass.

BARBIE: I'd roll my eyes if I could. But anyway, it never worked out. Nobody could bend.

Ever the party animals, Ken and Barbie head out of CBGB's after an all-night debauch. Close behind are stylists Gaile Vazbys and Alexandria.

KEN: (annoyed suddenly) You know what? Prince stole our Dreamglow Bed idea on his 1999 tour. Sort of. You know (touching Barbie's arm), I want to say something for Barbie. She's taken such a bad rap over all these years. Like she's an airhead. And she's not. Barbie's a tough broad.

Uh, Barbie? You mean, with the original pump feet and moldy blue eyeshadow? With her little pink felt malt-shop dress? A tough broad?

KEN: Yeah, a tough broad. We have a Biker Barbie in the works.

BARBIE: About my feet, though. That's been hell. Can you imagine wearing heels for all of your life, even in sneakers?

KEN: Though nothing's definite yet, we may be doing some commercials. For motorcycles.

BARBIE: Yeah, if Jim McMahon and Sandra Bernhard can . . .

Your singing voice, Barbie, sounds eerily familiar.

BARBIE: Well (looks at Ken), what do you think? Think I can spill the beans?

KEN: What the hell.

BARBIE: My voice was dubbed in for Annette Funicello in all of her beach party movies.

No!

BARBIE: Absolutely. That's me on

"Pineapple Princess" all the way.

KEN: We're also tossing around the idea of Androgyne Barbie 'n' Ken in one.

BARBIE: Yeah, two for the price of one—the eyeliner's free.

Do you two take drugs?

BARBIE: Uh, well, we have been known to adjust our attitudes a bit.

KEN: Yeah, just a bit. We've tried Ecstasy.

It must be sorta difficult for you to procure.

BARBIE: G.I. Joe used to help us. I used to date him, you know.

KEN: Can we change the subject, please?

Why didn't it work out?

BARBIE: Our backgrounds were too different, and besides, he couldn't readjust to civilian life.

KEN: (loudly, over Barbie) We'd also like to own our own radio station.

BARBIE: Who wouldn't?

KEN: (ignoring her, still talking) Its call letters could be WKEN.

BARBIE: Uh-oh, there he goes again. Citizen Ken.

KEN: Maybe someday we could have Ken 'n' Barbie Village. Don't the Osmonds have something like that?

Hot Rockers franchises, all over the country.

BARBIE: Tequila always does this to him.

KEN: We could be the first dolls on the next space shuttle.

BARBIE: It's times like these that really make me miss the malt shop.



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